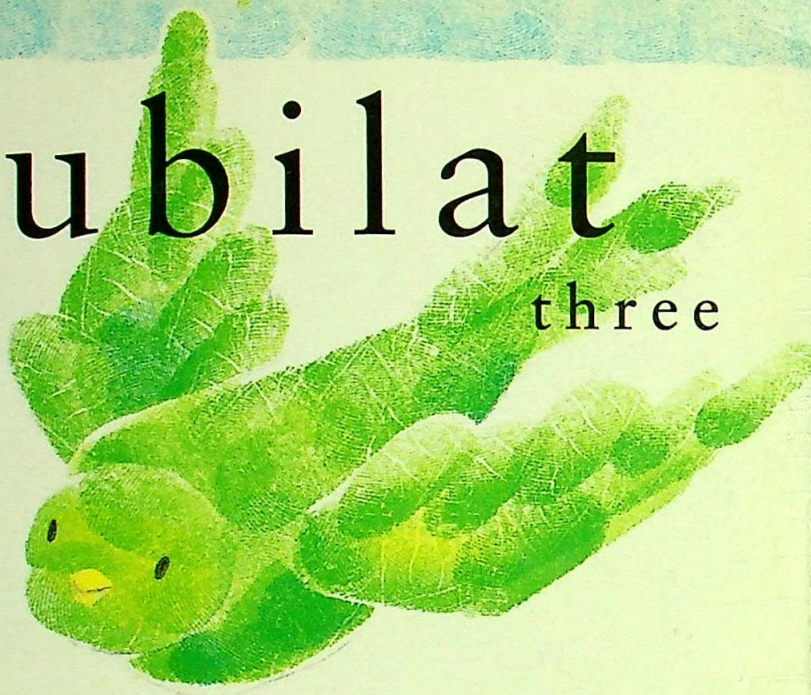


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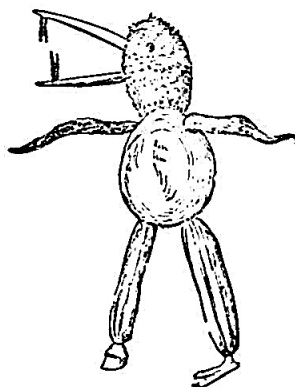






# jubilat

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*Congratulations to Heather McHugh, whose poem My One, which appeared in jubilat 1, has been selected by Robert Hass for inclusion in The Best American Poetry, 2001.*



# LATE GALLOP

*Eugen Jebeleanu*

An opaque brim of shadow  
hung on my forehead.  
Come on, I told myself,  
you are a jockey  
in the sky  
of your late life.  
You can still be useful,  
even if you can no longer hold out  
against the nurse with shiny steel teeth.  
And I started to gallop,  
between weeds, between forests, between  
happy fawns with such tender, humid snouts,  
between brilliant, fiery statues, until  
I heard a voice whimper  
It hurts, everything hurts.  
And everything was hurting.  
And I entered a cave without end.  
And only the far-off snout of a deer  
signaled me. And this is all.

—translated from the Romanian by Matthew Zapruder

# CIRCUMSTANTIAL

*Steve Healey*

They found a body by the river.  
They found the left hand clutching a lodestar.  
In the breastpocket a torn matchbook cover,  
black ballpoint map going south.  
A song winding through the ribcage,  
taking hair and skin samples  
to naked agoras. They found the face  
a palimpsest of looks, darker wards,  
moonstruck houses. Something sharp and soft,  
a turning corner that didn't say goodbye,  
there's a reason for being gone.  
We've come far not to end,  
and I will always love that  
autumns ago even weather seemed slow  
to change. We smelled the color between  
and found the sun there  
a bruise coming the long way home  
like the brainchild or last disciple  
of a lost summer. We superimposed  
dusk over noon and felt a telepathic fish  
travel down the neck exerting  
pressure against the coccyx.  
We were not alone in that aboriginal city,  
not far from the river and its barge  
called Onward, whose wake was white enough  
to remember shores of red, orange, yellow,

shed from the body they found between  
the lines, trees unastonished  
on the bluff, leaning.

# AN ALLEGORY OF DOUBT

*Peter Gizzi*

Crossing a fiddle, a bow pulls,  
and the antique century renews itself:  
steam liner pushing off into the newsreel  
when film was young  
... these strings sound fog, then a tug,  
then a single ray piercing dawn.  
A crash of metal over sea, rocks, trees,  
gardens and cut stone. C chord as ground.  
The chipped patina told a story  
of earth's settlement. A Roman bell  
... it's getting late, the wind picks up;  
in her dream she told of shattered windows,  
prisms, a ribbon above the city, a deer  
drinking from it with a chandelier for antlers  
... she said my love is like modernity,  
whirring, throwing switches, a discus,  
a silent particle when the atomic night,  
the parabolic night, cold, no longer water  
over stone splashing through trees under stars  
... the quartet is often a stand of pine,  
a confetti streamer unraveling, tumbling  
arabesques of glee, sometimes  
a marionette, sometimes twine pulled  
through a dixie cup. A waxy aria  
... my dream is a picnic by a winter lake  
she said. In full regalia she said—silk rugs,

carriages, hats and plates, a toe of gold  
in a marble field, fox in the snow  
. . . folks were dressed in colonial fashion,  
then I knew it was colonial times.  
There was going to be a marriage.  
In her dream she was not looking for  
a bridal dress, but working in words,  
she said, she found her dress  
. . . the circus is coming. The organ's pipes  
reach even here when we walk  
our lute strings into town, simple words  
in a bramble of words, let them build  
to a commotion now that we've learned  
music is not for kings  
. . . O let the sun pass over me. Overhead,  
strike my wrists, my knees. Here.  
I will slake the baubles from my milky gown.  
The willow spear is green, she said.  
The stars abound

# THREE LETTERS TO JEAN ROUSSELOT

*Pierre Reverdy*

16 May 1951

Dear Rousselot,

It's obvious that what matters is what you invent, that is what you can put of yourself into your manner of saying what you say. This, I think, is what is called genius. For if I am against the picturesque which consists of taking a train, a boat, a plane, a rocket, going to a bar here or there—it's all the same, according to the great travelers without imagination—it's because this style of the picturesque doesn't apply to me. I have caught the train, the boat, I have traveled in Italy, in Spain, in England, in Greece. For the great pleasure of my eyes and the great profit of my experience. But truly, I never had any idea of trying to make use of these vague displacements. The true adventurer is the one who invents his adventures. For me, to find myself in a port is to enjoy everything my senses and my mind can feel and judge in a port. That's all. I don't make up romantic images. I once wrote—the only adventure, the one which lasts, namely life, for heaven's sake, the secret inexpressible life, life at its simplest even, this burning life of a prisoner with his two eyes always ardently fixed on the blind. Have you noticed the phrase—I no longer know in which poem—"we will never escape the fate of being prisoners." It's things like that which people should find in what I've written and comment on. I know it's not easy and would take a lot of time. Have you also noticed that in speaking of a man, in trying to get inside the real drama, you would have to be able to say what goes on

inside him at night, for instance, when with the lights out he's there alone between the sheets. That is to say—nothing, the greatest wordless despair, in that nothingness of life as soon as you sound it yourself without using witnesses. Dear Jean Rousselot, you're going to have to try and see clearly through the murk, even for the part you've agreed to take on. An obscure life, without anything dazzling, without any brilliant colors, a terrible difficulty to grasp the real, and an even greater difficulty perhaps to be content with certain appearances, with the disconcerting lacework that in the world of the arts so many myth-mongers, myth-spinners weave for themselves and others. On the other hand, of course, there is intimate reverie as refuge. But knowing quite well that it's only a dream, a refuge. I don't know of any dreamer who has as sharp a sense of inexorable reality as myself; I even think few realists (without scruples, it's in this way that they're myth-mongers) have this deadly sense of reality as much as me. . . .

. . . I came into the world on the 11th of September 1889 at midday, not far from the station and the college of the town you know—you remember the whistling of trains during the night?—I will tell you how I began to breathe the air of this new milieu, rather quickly, pushed out by a movement of terror on my mother's part; a terror which my sister—three and a half—caused her at that moment. . . .

In any case the terror of the real world has never stopped weighing on my destiny. I think no one has ever noticed how in my poems the earth has never been solid under my feet—it capsizes, I feel it capsize, shake, collapse inside me. The sense of this cosmic instability which I have always felt has never struck me so much as now when everyone seems to have taken on this fear a little. All the social, material insecurity. You know what I mean. I know few people as haunted by it as myself, in short, I recognize it when there is nothing out there like it. Briefly, my dear friend, I have never, apart from that childhood spent by the seaside or on the property at the foot of Black Mountain which I told you about the other night—an indescribably

animal childhood, completely given over to sensations and sensuality—I have never found the earth hospitable. Once the age of intelligence came—rather later perhaps with me than others—nature, which I only distinguished from myself very late, which I loved so much, to the point where I couldn't spend much time far removed from it and its adornments, nature has seemed to me hostile, inhuman, terribly painful, in conflict with man—whilst it's man who began the conflict. Of course he's broken nature in, so much it mostly appears entirely tamed. For many who don't think about it, it's maybe never even existed in its wild state. But wild beasts, as all those broken-in know, have frightful returns. And for some who, under all the make-up, perceive nature in its wild state and their own situation at times as some kind of fragile overhang—there results an unbearable agony. From the state of nature—small ultra-sensitive animal in the wild—I passed gradually, imperceptibly to an exclusive concern with achieving beauty, that emotion that bursts forth from the clash between hard, implacable reality and tender, sensitive, weak and yet at the same time strong human nature. High intelligence, darkened awareness, man nailed to his rock. The task, the duty of sculpting for yourself your own life, of lifting the summit high enough into the light that it may be justified . . . Must I say that for me in these last years the machine's had a lot of grinding wheels, lots of snapped springs. As with everyone, I guess. You can judge for yourself. . . .

When I was a child there were two sides to me. The side of the heart, frenzied love for my own—and the life of games-holidays—animals as significant as people, exaggerated tenderness for the servants and farmhands with no distinctions made. The side of the mind, torture—school, life in a chain gang up to the last day: after I'd stopped going to college I used to wake suddenly, startled out of the nightmare which always consisted of being obliged to go to classes, it was terrible.

Born in Narbonne: 13 September 1889 (the official date instead of the real 11). First at the small Toulouse high school, then the college at Narbonne.



Studies worse than mediocre and painful, apart from French, reasonably easy. But I think it's useless to talk about these things too precisely. You will never catch the real person, so invent it. Along the lines of what I'm telling you. . . .

You begin by talking of Narbonne at the time of your arrival and on that point you can romanticize or poeticize as much as you like. I think you must still have some quite clear impressions. Especially if you spent a rather long time there: the change of the seasons, the return of the holidays, the shortest days, the town with its lights on, the contrasts between the summer mornings, limpid, fresh, happy under the plane-trees, like in all the towns of the South, and those frightful empty afternoons, crushed by the sun, ominous, often a bell ringing somewhere, more mournful than anywhere else—and if you can make way for me for a moment—It's there that in '8' etc. . . . the time spent with studies—the sea, the countryside, animal life so important because of that type of magic appeal of nature. At twenty one, departure. No obstacles on my father's part, the opposite of what mostly happens. In Paris, 1910, Montmartre—Friends met by chance, considering who they were. And I carry out my work with this sole (or in any case principal) anxiety—the real reason for living—to justify my life, to appease my conscience. Writing saved me—I saved my soul. I can't imagine what my life would have been if I hadn't written. But I think I am neither a poet nor a writer nor an artist. But a man who could find no other means of keeping his contact with life, of surviving. I wrote as one clings to a life buoy. Before 1914 the tough delights of undertaking this wonderful adventure with such friendships.

Finally 1926, a new haunting. Need for the absolute. I leave Paris for Solesmes: being or nothingness. . . .

What I would like Manoll to try to do is to take the following point of view: to speak of me as if I had already been dead for eighty years: if in all

conscience he can say something from that point of view then what he says will be worth saying. If I'm to be erased in eighty years then it little matters to me what's said now. The present is what passes away, your feet in the wet clay. You don't know what will come out of it and especially what will remain. The monument is what comes out and remains of your work in the mortar, on the building site. Imagine what terrible labor, Notre Dame under the hard fierce sun, in the cold, breaking stone! A poet slogs at this terrible labor throughout his life: it's hard, it's not pretty, and what haunts him is the problem of enduring, and I am a haunted man, in everything that interests me or touches my passion. . . .

Yours with much friendship

PR

May 1951

My dear Rousselot,

I'll never finish if I keep on telling you all these forgotten nothings and I don't get a move on. I've never found my own story interesting. You can imagine then how little I can think of it as useful to others. And writing it is far worse than speaking about it. Speech is forgotten so quickly. But I realize the difficulty of your task if you don't have any material given to you. I wanted to help you. It wouldn't have displeased me in any case had you invented a character from all these pieces based on what I've written and what you've seen. It's even a little what I am expecting from you. . . .

For example when you find in a poem of mine "I am the vagabond whose memories hold onto him and keep him from going away," it's enough that this be explained to you to see a whole side of my work and how I am still stuck at anchor. The heart, a convict's ball and chain, holding me back in the harbor. . . .

For my own part I'm in no way an anthropophage and have such horror of human flesh I avoid eating it, even in literature or poetry. That's why this enterprise is a terrible ordeal for me. I should never have accepted it basically. I am very happy to have seen all three of you the other day. But if things could end there how pleasant life would be. Writing has never been for me more than a second best. I would so much have preferred to live in reality. In any case I never wanted to write just with ink from an inkwell; for lack of blood—not strong enough, my dear friend—maybe with tree sap. . . .

Finally I can't take anymore. Do what you can. Be gentle. I've just read the studies Seghers sent me. I'm sick of it, I'm stretched to breaking point. I don't know if you're going to understand me. But this business of glory, my God, I had never envisaged it. Is this what an author should do while alive? Later, much much later perhaps, I don't know. Truly people are hideous.

And beauty in all this, what happens to it? The beauty a work should conceal and reveal when a different sensibility touches it, what is done with it? Is it really necessary to know the color of an author's underpants? And you know, don't be mistaken about this, it's not even moving. By bringing everything out into the open, and immediately, with the secret desire to stir up some strong odor, it evaporates quickly. Love is replaced by curiosity—curiosity quickly satiated in any case. I don't know if this is any better. . . .

—Narbonne. Origin—strictly, exclusively Narbonnaise. I've never heard of any relative come from elsewhere, any marriage alliance, even within the South. Some distant relatives in the immediate neighborhood and whom in any case I didn't know. We didn't have much family spirit among us. My great-grandparents stonemasons, for churches of course. My grandfather a sculptor, my other grandfather a sculptor, my great uncle an ornamental sculptor. I knew his workshop, because of his successor, and on the walls of the workshop I saw drawings done by his own hand. My grandfather had long given up his trade when I visited. But I spent part of my childhood surrounded by furniture sculpted by him. A great number of the chapels and church statues in the region are by him. Likewise in the Abbey of Fonfroide near Narbonne. The bigoted churchwoman of Narbonne is by my grandfather.

Since my grandfather, over scrupulous, a perfection-maniac, wasn't enriched by the practice of his art—or artisanship—my father doubtless found it more prudent to engage in a more lucrative occupation. The region's main commerce was well known—and besides his dream was to live on a property, on the land. Through work and courage, very young, he got hold of a very good situation, and acquired the property he wanted so much where he ruined himself by his determination to plant a vineyard when at that time in the Carcassonne people grew only cereals. And when the property was working at full output, wine was selling at one franc, I repeat one franc by the hectalitre. It annoys me a little to pay 100 francs a litre. Right up to the

catastrophe the property made us very happy. The only moments of true happiness—undiluted—that I've had in my life, I really think. This brings us to the strike of the wine growers and the atmosphere of Narbonne 1900-1907. The bloodshed happened in 1907. The atmosphere was sinister—terrible poverty and hunger gripped the countryside; they threw wine into the rivers; on the 14th of July the public fountain in front of the Town Hall became a fountain of wine. Drunkards scooped it up with tins. Every Thursday at the top of Les Barques—you know the place—near the metal bridge they sold the furniture of poor people at auction—the huissiers made a packet. There was money to be seen—but little, so little it's not even worth talking about except to say it was more beautiful than the money of today as it represented the means to a life freer, more pleasant, more certain when you had it. The atmosphere of the troubles 1905-1907 was something quite epic. You saw this small town occupied by 30 or 35,000 troops: right in the month of June under a torrid sun; the men all sleeping on the boulevards or in brothels, numerous it's true, but all the same! There was this fear of an epidemic of I don't know what. The troops were given lots of wine—as were the people, and the first round of shootings, the most murderous and infamous, was carried out by a detachment from the Tulle regiment on guard at the Town Hall—numerous barrels of wine were cracked open for them. Wine, blood, brains spilt—that of a poor drunkard watching from the other side of the square. Everything spilt on the pavement—and the cuirassiers from Lyons, volunteers sent against the troubles, firing off a round during the night, had fun shooting off a salvo at the lowered steel shutters of an anarchist bistro that refused to serve them. In the afternoon more dead. In short, back then we had already known military occupation and the law of the revolver. An anarchist as everyone was at twenty in those days, the turn of events could hardly incline me towards a tender view of the guardians of law and order. An out and out Anarchist of course, 1909 approached. Luckily I was exempted. That was all I was waiting for to make a bolt from that unbreathable small town atmosphere. I should say that, since then, I've found many other atmospheres just as unbreathable.

No religious formation. Not even baptized, for my father, a free spirit and liberal such as scarcely exist anymore, didn't want to present us with a fait accompli. "When they come of age, they will decide."

Before going on to Paris, a moment to try and recapture what was going to be lost. Nature, the love of nature, my identifying stamp. That love I caught on the property that was my father's dream and our Paradise. There we were free to live the way we liked as children—like animals—almost naked, surrounded by the animals, in the company of the young peasant children, the domestics' children and a few friends my parents invited. Near Carcassonne, at the foot of Black Mountain, the countryside is thickly wooded, fresher, greener, beautifully watered by streams that have only just stopped being mountain torrents. The sources of the rivers are near at hand. That clear water, we dreamed of it day and night when the property was lost, and it's in a large number of my poems. For that patch of earth I've had an immense love. But there was also the sea where we would spend the first month of the long vacations. There the earth didn't exist. Just sky, rocks and water and that enormous freedom I felt so terribly deprived of once I left childhood behind. I think only the absence of a moral sense allows one to feel free in this stifling society—as a child I don't think it was a moral sense that stifled me—any more than anyone else! . . . However it may be, this frantic love of nature—in the form of open space in what must be the most harvested of regions at the foot of a mountain, emerging from a fold in the landscape hidden by the midday sun, dry and parched uphill, shady and fresh lower down where a river of frozen water winds its way—and the sea, the sea on desert beaches—that love turned me into a rather amazing species of amphibian, a prisoner of the land in love with the sea. Finally it's the land that dragged me back and stifled me. The land which kept me in this reality full of limits, whilst I wanted so much to go and end my days on the threshold of that door to the infinite whose coastline is such a tempting image. For my moral and physical health there came the moment when I had to leave Paris. If in open spaces on land I breathe badly, it's so much worse hemmed in by stone. . . . A bid for more freedom, always for

the absolute, for the infinite—the absurd need for the infinite—and I left for Solesmes because a friend pointed it out to me as suiting my aspirations of that moment. . . .

Solitude has never been a goal for me but a means. I'm no bear but equally no sheep. And {in Solesmes} there was a way to be not completely outside humanity. To understand this you must look at things from the point of view of those who only come together to tear themselves apart. I've always held a very dignified ideal of friendship and of the relationships between people . . . Paris, friends—the chance I've always had in my life to have friends of an extraordinary quality. Is it instinct, much stronger in me than intelligence, which let me discover, choose and keep them despite a thousand dramas, misunderstandings, etc. etc.? Still the same friends remain after forty years. I arrived in Paris the third of October 1910, on one of those days of light mist I would find delightful later on but which that morning at ten o'clock on the Quai d'Orsay in the center of Paris simply made me want to return home to the wonderful autumn sun which the day before caressed me with its rays. A friend was waiting for me, we go up to Montmartre in one of those horse-drawn taxis, the driver on top in his leather gear, etc. . . . A heartbreaking traversal of Paris from the Place de la Concorde. I found it all frightful—the gray façades, the leprous monuments. The Paris of my imagination went down the drain, the crass disastrous decor, and the black trees—that was the limit! I spent the first night unable to sleep in a small hotel in the Place Ravignan. Right opposite the Bateau Lavoisier where I would live a few months later when I got to know Gris who was the first to receive me in his studio looking out on the footpath of the triangular square. It's there I first met Picasso who was still living there for a short while, then Braque, Maurice Raynal, Pablo Gargallo, then, later on, Laurens who lived in one of the last pokey little underground houses, Galanis whom I would meet up with again a few years later as a neighbor in rue Cortot; Max Jacob and Apollinaire, so many others I loved. We were living the last years of the antediluvian epoch. Never again has the sun

passed its hand so gently along the skin. Never again has the air been charged with such ravishing perfumes. Never has so much carelessness and confidence escorted us towards the unknown. Because, obviously, for the first time that unknown was war, and all that war and wars have taught us—useless to talk about it, absolutely useless. I was exempted. Like all those in my situation or something similar—not officially called up—I enlisted. And then, at the end of a few months, discharge. I return to Paris where I find once more the cripples of my kind and the glorious wounded. And there between Montmartre and Montparnasse, the life of work taken up again at length after an interruption of several months during which those who hadn't left had decided to wait, so as not to profit from the absence of those who were under fire. But the war went on too long. I think artists have never been grouped together so sympathetically as at that moment. It's at that time that I founded the little review *Nord-Sud* (1916-1917) with the sole aim of bringing together works and authors of similar aesthetic tendencies. An almost useless attempt in any case—and one I continued for almost a year and a half only because I didn't want to drop too quickly what I had undertaken. What is curious is that at that moment the bookstores were so empty—there was such a shortage of printed paper to read—that *Sic* and *Nord-Sud*, which were really nothing much, were received with the greatest favor. Small books likewise and it's then I felt all the pleasure the publication of a book can bring—when you've done it yourself from beginning to end—from the text to the binding. At present you must realize the books of editors are quite indifferent to me, especially after one of these merchants told me that selling books or ties is completely the same thing. With age the taste he had for poetry has doubtless turned somewhat towards the side of accountancy. And now, overwhelmed with disgust, I shut up shop, my dear Rousselot. Make of this what you can.

With much friendship yours

PR



May 1951

My dear friend,

Thanks! You are an honest man—an honest man as I think a poet should be, that's to say a consciousness more alive, more fastidious than one of those hard-shouldered, hard-hearted, hard-stomached individuals who succeed in the various transactions of real life. All the same we're the ones who are asked to undress in public. I can't do it. Move on to the old corpses and even with them don't be too brutal. I've just read part of the collection—and I realize that mostly the biographic side is rather restrained, sometimes even zero (Carco). I won't speak of the novel invented by the author (Cendrars) for which you need a certain talent. When one isn't so talented, when one only has the truth to tell, not much is left—it's pitiful—and almost the same things repeated for each poet. I noticed that only the death notices are really moving, or in any case interesting. What would you expect, it's difficult to know what will become of you as long as you're alive. Nothing perhaps. Whilst those who have endured already the first test of time have achieved that degree of marble where we have to gaze up at them. They've grown tall, they are beyond humanity, they are in the fields of unchanging eternity. No one among the living can be certain of one day joining them. Truly it embarrasses me a little, letting myself be inserted in this queue which, after all, may end up going nowhere.

But, of course, there are some things to say uniquely about poetic work. This effort in the night to try to reach a clarity more dazzling than daylight, this difficulty in perceiving reality; and poetic expression as a way of perceiving the real at the same time as freeing oneself from the same reality's obsessive hold, reality which only reveals itself under duress, except through art.

"We will never escape the fate of being prisoners," I wrote a long time ago. For me, it's still true, more and more true. Isn't it more and more obvious

that except for those who lie and deceive themselves and shut their eyes the world is more and more a prison?

Journeys—in Italy in '29 and '36. In Spain in '31. In Greece in 1936, in England very often before the war because I had friends there. In Switzerland in '39. But you can see I'm no great traveler. As for my books when I decided to bring out a small book I rummaged about in the drawer where I bury my manuscripts once they're done, often without even rereading them. I would choose what seemed to me the best and go and find a nice little woman with a tiny printing business—a ground floor workshop below a glazed window, in a small courtyard at the foot of the Butte. She'd take the copy—we'd choose the characters, she had few but for *La Lucarne ovale* she bought new ones and enriched her supply a little; and since, usually, once decided everything had to be done very quickly, my woman would take on the compositor without his having learned the trade. She would also be the one to go, sometimes we'd go together, to select and buy the paper in rue Saint-Martin or rue de Rennes, and the printer would deliver the book to us in great flat sheets: folding and binding we did at home. Well then, my dear friend, these little books printed in 100 or 150 copies brought me (gold coins) more money than the books of today's big name editors—on smoky paper! It's very simple, 1,000 or 1,200 or 1,500 francs according to the number of copies multiplied by 200 approximately. I assure you no editor is capable of doing that with one of my books. And the works remained my property whereas the editors become the absolute masters of them. And each little book had 100 poems maximum. My books in bookshops have about 400 or 600, and none of them has brought me half. . . .

I must send you the cutting which came at just the right moment to remind me of the period that interests you. I don't know if we'll see again the lines of trains (free trips) without interruption from one village to another. Narbonne-Carcassonne, Narbonne-Béziers, Narbonne-Perpignan, Montpellier—trains in long queues not even going forward. You got into a

carriage, you spent all Sunday there—it was the peaceful time of meetings before the shootings took over. At Montpellier 500,000 protestors—it was deafening, mind-numbing. But I don't think this could happen again. What's astonishing is the circumstances. The South had become wealthy very rapidly during and after the phylloxera which had destroyed the vines. There was a shortage of wine, everyone wanted it. The small amount harvested, then sold very dear, made fortunes. But during this time licenses were given to make sugar wines chemically. When the years of large-scale production of vines grafted on the American model came, these sugar wines had taken the place of true wine (*ordinaire*), and then there was the long crisis, the crash of the wine industry and ruin throughout the countryside. It's not just today, then, that shortages favor the amassing of wealth. Black market or white market. And the events of those days were the result of the political struggle in Parliament between representatives of the sugar growers of the North who sold their sugar to the manufacturers of fake wine and the weaker representatives of the wine growers who wanted to sell true wine at a reasonable price. I don't think the issues are at all the same today.

Your friend

PR

*—translated from the French by Peter Boyle*

# WHERE THE VALLEY TURNS

*Pierre Reverdy*

Let the sleeping-car run smooth in its own due season  
    making its tour of the world  
with the sun on our oars  
the signal switched on  
its glass skimming the green landscape  
    lower down

The mountain pressed up behind the house  
evening gone to sleep against the hedge  
a tall black dog running loose at twilight  
down avenues of leaves.  
Cries of golden birds pierce the valley.  
The labyrinth ricochets with laughter.  
Rocks spurt out  
barbed offerings of the pine trees.  
Cypresses surround the village church—  
all the names lost and found again and shining now,  
the stars all counted out  
and the streetlights in their slow procession between the windows.

    This summer night  
plucked from the ends of flagpoles and on the wind  
shadows float by of all that passes  
and where the valley turns  
the clear eyes of animals.  
Holes in the guttering of the sky

our pockets filled with water  
the greyhound bounding free beyond the leash  
our numbered tickets.

# NEW STARS

The wind was sweeping the atmosphere.  
Above the table  
a halo of voices—  
where did it come from  
this line you followed with your eyes up to the ceiling  
the shadow taking refuge against the backdrop of the wall?

The wind swept up everything.  
It left your voice  
and a resonance in the air.  
Broken windowpanes  
raindrops came in.  
The chimney holds two stars  
and your evaporated tears.  
Between the two of us appears a veil.  
You must think of everything  
and truly we have kept watch

while a plane was harvesting the stars  
one winter evening.

# THE ROAD THAT TURNS

A terrible grey of dust in the weather.  
Dull echoes of approaching rain in the evening air.  
On the winding road this humid evening  
harsh voices of complaint  
grinding out old tunes.  
The heart pitching this way and that—  
all the disasters of the trade.

When the desert fires go out one by one  
when the eyes are moist as grass blades  
the dew moving barefoot on the leaves  
morning scarcely risen  
there is someone who looks for  
a lost address on the hidden road.  
Stars brushed up, flowers tumbling down  
through broken branches—  
the dark river wipes its soft, faintly protruding lips.

When the traveler's steps on the clockface  
dominate all movement, pushing against the horizon,  
all cries are past, all times meet up.  
As for me I am walking to the sky, my eyes set  
right into the sun,  
lots of noise over nothing,  
lots of names in my head,  
all that's happened in the world  
and this holiday festival  
where I have lost my time.

# CENTRAL HEATING

A tiny light—  
you see it move down onto your chest  
to light you up  
—a woman stretched out like a rocket—  
In the corner a shadow is reading.  
Its feet, dangling loose, are too pretty.

Short-circuit in the heart  
mechanical breakdown  
What magnet holds me  
My eyes and my love take the wrong track.

Nothing much.  
The fire, lit once again, once more goes out.  
I've had it with the wind.  
I've had it with the sky.  
Basically everything you see is artificial,  
even your mouth.  
Yet I am warm there where your hand touches me.  
The door is open but I don't enter.  
I see your face and don't believe in it.  
You are pale.  
One night you were sad.  
You cried, resting on your luggage.  
Below in the street  
some men were laughing.  
From time to time children, almost naked, wandered by.  
Clear water.

A thin thread of red copper conducts light.  
The sun and your heart are made of the same stuff.



# CELESTIAL PROFILE

A shadow suddenly falls across the sunlight on the branches. The roofs shine silently with the same freshness. Laughter of happiness floods out a window and daylight returns, from the wall to your forehead and from the trees, landing in that space where the lines of colors cross.

In this tender light, where the future is hiding, a memory turns, stops and threatens me. The shadow of the sky covers the horizon, effaces all my longing.

No matter what, we have to leave.

—*translated from the French by Peter Boyle*

# CENTRAL HEATING

A tiny light—  
you see it move down onto your chest  
to light you up  
—a woman stretched out like a rocket—  
In the corner a shadow is reading.  
Its feet, dangling loose, are too pretty.

Short-circuit in the heart  
mechanical breakdown  
What magnet holds me  
My eyes and my love take the wrong track.

Nothing much.  
The fire, lit once again, once more goes out.  
I've had it with the wind.  
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Below in the street  
some men were laughing.  
From time to time children, almost naked, wandered by.  
Clear water.

A thin thread of red copper conducts light.  
The sun and your heart are made of the same stuff.

# THAT WHICH IN US RISES TO BE SUNG TO

*Marsha Janson*

At some point you realize a person can go  
A long time between watering holes.  
Then, like the sorrel mare who has been pastured all summer,  
A summer spent grazing knee-deep in grass,  
Unfettered in blonde grass, there is the inevitable looking back  
Towards the barn with longing.  
Still, at some point you may grow weary with your obsessions.

But look—it's the beach and the beach road  
Paved with broken shells.  
The sand and grass and dunes. A shack.  
Give me five fingers and I'll look inside.  
Am I too heavy? How long can you hold me?  
This might be the stage before dying. But we're young,  
It's July and we're walking through the dunes.  
Which are called parabolic.

Then it's a Monday night and we're at David's place  
And it begins to rain. The downpour is calamitous, dismantling  
Potted plants on the sidewalk and the river is rising  
While we sit around the table writing wishes on scraps  
Of paper, tossing them into the flood.  
Not oblivious to, but because of. Encumbered,  
Our scaffolding disrupted. Multiple theories regarding

Joy and water. The river is a spyglass  
And the fish have eyes of coin.  
You're obsessed with hats and I can't stop thinking  
About time, clocks, cuckoo  
And otherwise. Diaphanous winged insects cruising the dial.

This might be the stage before acceptance.  
It's best if you hold your arm steady while I look for the vein.  
Take the tourniquet into your mouth and think of poppies.  
It must be getting late.  
Someone says: *let me be finished*. Another asks: *may I be excused?*  
And you owl, for the last two nights, calling,  
Talons gripping the pine branch outside my bedroom window.  
Are you complaining or is that plaintive?

Right now I'd give anything to be sung to.

# [A MULE-DRAWN SCRAPER PACKED THIS EARTH: LEVEES]

*D.A. Powell*

*Ode to Billy Joe*

a mule-drawn scraper packed this earth: levees  
mounded into ossuaries. many a first flower  
enjoyed the mud and let itself be plucked away  
from church picnics. the gathering of men in fields

"what do you remember about the first?"

"I remember the lids of his eyes. the cup of his hand  
under my head in the tall grass. a sharp pain  
in my guts: I remember saying the words:"

branching from the main body of the river  
sumptuous sloughs and overflows: dissipating  
potential floods. neither depth nor velocity is attained

under the bridge. half out of the moon. overalls  
bunched around our ankles. a shame of a kiss  
I cannot stay here: the river opens and swallows me

suppose the clamshell dredgers continued the search  
certain I had gone under a log: pinned. the steady current  
hounds sniffed under brush to catch my scent

miles downstream: lanterns swung out over the water  
dreaming of my face. the faces I had dreamt arose  
on the roads: the coats of watchers. unclinking the new life

save those foxgloves pressed in the empty pages of genealogy  
I lost the way back on purpose

# *from* WAYMARKS

*Peter Sacks*

2

Rain-reddened river mouth men shooting at sharks from the bridge  
a boy draped in his own  
prayer shawl casts out his portion of the law pulp stain & living  
scar beyond the wall

springs flow to a basin sunk under papyrus oleander wild bamboo  
tall minarets where  
childless women whisper to the tomb drop hard-boiled eggs into  
the pool cels sidle through

quick charcoal flickers slip into a niche above a sinking glint of yolk  
gate-beggar squatting  
torso bundled in an army coat his pillow stumps inflamed his face  
sweats each cadet

sets down his rifle on a rock kneels forehead to the sand backs off  
into a field of lime &  
nameless stones through which a small boy leads a white horse  
balancing a

load of iron rods bare feet hooves two heads nodding to no rhythm  
but their own the old  
engraving rips through ashen cities smoldering a crow chants  
*chimney* these are

the dead the hammerhead swung torrent-battered wall rust cribs of  
coal sealed cars a man  
zigzagging on the run towards me "Rosa" knife drawn tongue drain  
river sand smudges

of unmelted snow slide back after the first day Ibrahim will rinse his  
hands & pray into the wind  
still climbing step by cut step ice pick grown in place of hands slough  
hung for judgment

waiting on a market-box at noon shaved skull blue robes white owl &  
raven dozing his tin  
coin-cup on its side two brothers stretch out living rabbits one grips  
ears the other hind legs

short knife working through the pelt now gripped now wrenched  
straight down the body  
ungloved bluish muscles struggling hard until the slit throat pours  
unsheathed head eye-stalks . . .

### 3

West from Haran three-quarter moon pad sand chunk salt eye stone  
under the smoking lamp  
contracting camel haunches Youssef brings flour sugar mint a bag of  
vegetables two

scabbed moth-eaten sofas kneeling saddled rope tied nostril-ring  
large eyes  
the three commands *du go uzd stop uzd uzd* kneel down step on the  
neck to grab



the pommel swing into the wooden cradle Youssef crouches unties  
each leg the camel  
gargles angrily keels over on its side my weight flung clear an orange  
smashed against my hip

remount Youssef wraps the rein around its jaw beats mildly with his  
stick dislodging several  
tufts it lurches once twice eight feet up a lofted frieze the withers  
slope down from the

steep hump unsupported jolting *du* & *du* into the balancing surrender  
pelvis slotted groove  
spine like a slow whip flexing legs crossed dangle on the camel's neck  
a rocking outward

penetration of what falls away marooned in motion palm-lined where  
the water-course  
runs buried I say turn away due east across the dunes to nothing but  
unmarked desert

arguing till Youssef winds a cotton towel around his head & gestures  
to a notch in the horizon  
sinks into his robes face wrapped to eyeslit says there'll be a well by  
night one stop midday

a stiff dismount outcrop of desert spine cave-shaded squint our camels  
anchored on the dunes  
blood clogging every cell too stiff to ride I walk now body loosed  
accelerating past the

silhouettes in buckled light their motion soundless but for Youssef's  
kettle on his camel's flank. . .

Sand close-up broken stone for hours under cracking mask eyes closed  
 mouth leather membrane  
 shut against all memory of water nothing but drenched glare the shallows  
 crack & shatter underfoot

the air too hot to breathe more than what little keeps the overheated  
 lungs astir  
 nose funnel to the thudding bag of skull brain wavering swell of separations  
 rippling the farthest

margin etched into the plain near-blinded mouthless striding all but flung  
 oblivious breaking  
 down a larger mould still blazes back until the afterflare found stumbling  
 to the rough

stone well-rim pulley-beam the rubber bucket let drop deep gone wait now  
 for its crash  
 hauled hand by hand the brim of twilit spilling lifted sluice full reappearing  
 lips let trickle

into throat thin silt-slick stirs the body wholly stripped & drinking every  
 mouth the camels  
 bend to an iron dish we forage blown thorn-twigs Youssef baking bread  
 the stars so near

our fire's one of them the whole sky crammed its quilt pulled round us  
 constellations  
 pulled into the cloth late moon rising so close I roll aside out of its path  
 to dawn wind-ruffled

now only the morning star hangs by an afterthread its amber waters  
slipping back into  
the sunrise head & shouldered reload walk fast with the east already  
ruptured hot against my back . . .

# INTERVIEW WITH CAROLINE KNOX

Caroline Knox is the author of three books of poetry: *The House Party* (Georgia, 1984), *To Newfoundland* (Georgia, 1989), and *Sleeper's Wake* (Timken, 1994). Two others, *A Beaker* and *Nine Worthies*, have been finalists for various prizes. Her poems have appeared in *The American Scholar*, *The New Republic*, *The Paris Review*, *Ploughshares*, and other journals. She has received fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Fine Arts Work Center at Provincetown, the Ingram Merrill Foundation, the Massachusetts Cultural Council, and the Fund for Poetry. She lives in Westerly, Massachusetts.

*Your poems seem to celebrate names and naming. Could you talk about where that celebratory impulse comes from?*

I always want to discover a name to put in a poem such as Chidiok Tichborne, an almost impossible poet-name to say. I love naming and renaming, finding odd or strange or interesting names or ways of looking at things. I also love being surprised. I have a fear of writing the same poem over and over again, so I keep looking for more details that I haven't put in poems already. I don't want to get stuck. Don't poets feel that way? That they don't want to repeat themselves?

*Where do you get such names?*

First of all, I'm 62, so I've lived and have written poetry for a long time. My mother said I wrote my first poem when I was three, and maybe I did. My parents read to me a lot. My great aunt was Fanny Borden, Librarian of Vassar College, and she gave me many anthologies when I was little. I read

the *Rime of the Ancient Mariner* early. I was lucky to grow up that way. But I think I do what most poets do: collect fragments of things like names or, if I hear something fascinating, write it down. I'm a fragment saver, as most poets must be. There's nothing special about it. It's just a good habit—you're never not writing. Wallace Stevens called it the freight-yard method: he had a drawer at work in which he put pieces of poems. I try to do that. But there's a danger in this method, because there can be too much junk in a poem sometimes, making the poem too damned cute, or show-offy. I guess I'm more interested in style than in content, because if you're really living your life you've already got content.

*Are there particular styles that you find really compelling or interesting in contemporary American poetry?*

Certainly the l=a=n=g=u=a=g=e school, although I don't want to read just their poetry—I'm scared of starting to write like them and getting in a rut. But it's very exciting, and I admire it tremendously. I love to read Jorie Graham's poetry as well. Even though I don't understand the philosophy part of it, I can scoot along on the style of it and get a lot. It's so exciting to find the dashes and switches in her poems. But experimentation in poetry has always been wonderful, back past Williams to Stein.

*How did you start writing prose pieces? Specifically, how did the longer, more hybrid poems like "To Newfoundland" and "Hu-Kwa" come about?*

It goes back to school. I got a Ph.D. in English in Creative Writing from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee in 1981, and one of my best teachers was Jim Hazard. He made us read prose often in the poetry writing courses. We had to read works by Isidor Lautréamont and Zbigniew Herbert and Julio Cortázar, lots and lots of them. So I didn't have any choice—I had to do the work. It was great fun, but really hard—Is this a prose poem? What is a prose poem? Can we agree exactly? Is it a story? Is it half a story? In the

poem about Hu-Kwa the Chinese merchant, I was interested in the topic of the China trade. I looked at Chinese things in museums, I read Carl Crossman's book on the decorative arts of China and Jason Goodwin's book on the history of tea. A delicious tea is named after Hu-Kwa—it tastes like tarred line. Hu-Kwa was an admirable person, just as interesting and tough as any of the sea captains from the West, and he stood up to them. For the poem, I also liked the idea of people sitting on a ship at anchor talking about what they see. Nothing has to happen—they just yak. A Newfoundland dog is the speaker of "To Newfoundland." It's a poem about coming to America. But the discovery certainly didn't happen the way the poem promises it happened. We know the heroic and Perry-Miller versions of the discovery; a new version of the same old myth has to be entirely different—mock-heroic and casual, perhaps. Who would trust a dog speaker?

*What are the organizing principles of such poems?*

My prose poems have an aggregate of sentences dealing with a subject—the China trade or Vikings in longboats. I want to get in all the wonderful relevant terminology, such as *wadmal*, which was a sort of Viking astroturf. Do we need to know this? No—it's only there for its own sake, sitting in the poem. I only keep sentences that I'm proud of stylistically, and to finish a prose poem I take out (I hope) all the lousy sentences. There is never any plot, because I'm not interested in writing plot. I admire it in other writers, but I'm absolutely no good at writing it.

*Can you talk about your process of writing?*

If you're the kind of poet who can go to the computer and write all morning, I envy you tremendously. I can't do that; instead, I collect fragments, as I've said, and then in a fifteen-minute stint or so I put them together into the next section of a poem. I haven't had the option to sit in the study all

day. I married right after college and had three children. My husband was an Episcopal priest, so the family lived wherever the parish was. I couldn't go to graduate school until our youngest was in first grade, and then I went to the nearest creative writing program. I was always writing, though. When I was just out of college, women weren't always encouraged to be poets. Nobody actually discouraged you from writing a poem, but there didn't seem to be a way to go farther. Graduate school was wonderful. As a result of getting laughed at, my poetry became much less pretentious and self-important. And that's why we go to graduate school.

*Are you interested in Marianne Moore's poems? I sense a kind of kinship with her in your work.*

She is wonderful about sound, isn't she? And her learned details are amazing. With Moore you never feel you're being preached to, despite all the info. She's very respectful of the reader, but she will not be pushed around by old rules. She begins a poem with a subject, leaves it, doesn't return to it, as in "The Fish." You're not supposed to do any of this!

*What other poets were you influenced by?*

Well, I line them up as little figurines, little gods in the Pantheon. Stein and Stevens and Auden and Moore are among the great experimenters, then in the next generation Ashbery and O'Hara and Koch and Schuyler and Guest. The great Modernists were models of how to experiment with style. Stein wrenches language: syntax, diction, context. "Said" is a verb which she turns into a noun; "Not a bit beggar" is an invented idiom; in the play *Say It with Flowers*, a character says the scenery! A great Stevens-style tactic is to use funny animal and bird noises along with grand diction: "ceintures," "euphony," in "Disillusionment at Ten O'Clock" and "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird." Late Auden is especially whole-hearted and comic. Everyone should read *Auden's Poetry* by Justin Replogle. The book shows the

comic upsetting of expectations, as in the poem "Mountains," with "flowers laid out in exquisite splodges/ like a Chinese poem." But the speaker can't stand it up there! He laughs at himself: "nearby, a real darling/ Is cooking a delicious lunch. . . . Five minutes on even the nicest mountain/Is awfully long." Oh, God, how soon can we go home? All these examples of making unpoetic details sit seamlessly in a poem make the poem endlessly nourishing and goofy and beautiful. They made me like the billiard ball: they pushed me away from them to do something that was similar but different.

*Could you expand on that last point—specifically, how do you define your work as different from theirs?*

I don't think anyone would want to write a fake Stein poem or fake Stevens poem on purpose, would they? But if you can use some of their style maneuvers in the poem you're writing, then you've made some new art. At their best, the Modernists made a place in their poems for things that didn't belong. So when we write ours, we can carom off the models, using their style to say our content.

*The final moments of your poems can be very quiet and beautiful. It's almost like your poems set a whole world in motion, and suddenly at the end the language starts talking to itself.*

I'm thrilled that you would say that. Recently John Ashbery talked about how he tiptoes out of the poem right before it's over, and then the poem finishes itself. It's like the eyeglass case snapping shut. It's really over, it's quiet, and it should be. I also like the idea that the I in the poem is created, manufactured: it isn't Caroline Knox or Poet X. The poem is an artifact, like a pair of andirons or a candlestick, something useful and/or beautiful on the table that wasn't there before.

*Many of your poems incorporate different characters: dogs and historical figures and what have you. For instance, in "Exploring Unknown Territory" both your husband and John*



*Ashbery are characters.*

It's a play, sort of. My husband was sick of hearing me talk about Ashbery and O'Hara, though he was very polite and patient about this, as were our kids. So I made up this fake play. I used to run poems by my husband, and he would be a good sport.

*So that really is him speaking?*

No, I wrote fake words for him. He didn't mind; in fact, he thought it was funny. Like the Altman movie *Nashville*: it's full of weirdos, and then in come Julie Christie and Warren Beatty playing themselves. Don't you think that's funny? To have a real person enter a work of art and then leave—they walk back into the real world out of the art. And the art stays.

*I'm curious to know if there are any visual artists you feel drawn to.*

Fairfield Porter. In *The Harbor—Great Spruce Island*, Porter painted a gas fuel tank right out front, and the spruces and clouds very prominent and textured in the background. Someone told him to take out the gas tank, as it was a huge glob covered with wire and pipes and valves. He refused—this was part of the island world, it was necessary in the composition. I also like Larry Rivers. In his *George Washington Crossing the Delaware*, he calls the event “nerve-wracking and uncomfortable,” rather than in Leutze’s 1851 original, “heroic and slightly tragic.” The Rivers version has his wonderful smudged realism; it seems tentative and like a group of studies for itself, and the unseparated, unfinished elements seem dismembered. It is similar with Rivers’s cover for the *New York Times Magazine* of November 16, 1987, illustrating an issue on the Holocaust. The cover shows dozens of Jewish refugees—they are smudged, snowed on, scribbled on, lightly eroded, all in the Rivers fashion; their Stars of David are bright as a school bus, but fading. It’s at once clear and crisp, and disappearing. Finally, Abstract

Expressionism is fascinating to me because it emphasizes the surface of painting and the equal treatment of all elements on that surface. I would like to learn more about how Abstract Expressionism works, because I think the surface of a poem is so important.

*What do you think about the importance of place in your poems?*

It's something I always want to consider, the places and their names, funny or charming or peculiar. In two recent poems, "Sofonisba" and "Thérèse Levasseur," there are lots of European place names. They are there for their sound out loud, as much as anything, a pleasure and an entertainment to hear.

*Could you talk about your latest project, Nine Worthies?*

*Nine Worthies* is a book-length collection of prose poems which takes place in Boston and Newport in 1756, during the American Enlightenment, although the nine speakers of the poem don't sound very enlightened. The speakers are having their portraits painted by Nathaniel Smibert (1734-1756), and they rattle on about what is important to them: slaves, picnics, flirtation, clothes, theological disputes. Some are important—Peter Harrison, the first American architect, and Samson Occum, the Mohegan Indian orator. Some are beautiful, overly-opinionated girls.

*It's interesting to think of that in contrast to the formal poems you've written. For instance, in your other new manuscript, A Beaker, you have a canzone.*

Oh, that took a long time. And it's full of nonsense, such as, "Oh, God, here comes my aunt!" You're not supposed to put that sort of empty detail in a canzone—you're supposed to have high-minded ecstasy and profundity. And you're not supposed to lose your contact lenses; to do so is irresponsible and expensive.

Could you read a poem, such as “*Dies Irae*,” from *A Beaker*?

Oh, sure. “*Dies Irae*” is a Latin hymn about Judgment Day. It’s from the thirteenth century, attributed to Thomas à Celano. It’s in funeral liturgies, and Isaac Watts wrote a fine eighteenth-century version, a British Navy poem.

*Dies Irae*

An end to vacations in Ostend, an end to memorizing  
all of Keats’s “*Endymion*,” an end to weeding calendulas.  
An end to it: spending at Henri Bendel, and an end to fat rear ends  
for some people. An end to telephone blunderbores, an end to  
stones flying through the air toward injuries. An end  
to problems of the endocrine gland, an end to having to  
know all endings for cases and tenses, and an end to tension.  
An end to irresponsible blenders, but no end to a  
new blender which blends splendidly. Perpend:  
an end probably to the enclitic *ne*, an end to the expensiveness of endive.  
As a pendant lost from a chain’s end, an end to mendaciousness.  
Day in, day out, an end to endless wrath, an end to a century, and a  
millennium;  
an end to strife anent human rights, an end to endemic hate.  
An end to codependence, an end to the work endomorph.  
An end to demented emendations, and on to an amendment of life.

*It was wonderful to see how generative the word “end” can be.*

It’s stupid and goofy, too, and I stick by it. This poem demonstrates a lot of the matters you’ve brought up that I’m interested in doing. It takes gigantic topics, the end of the world and the notion of accountability, and it looks at them in ways you’re not supposed to.

*There's a surprising seriousness to such play.*

Good. I mean, there will always be strife and human rights issues—it's not getting better, it's getting worse. In an honest poem, the human rights issue has to be right in there next to Henri Bendel and fat rear ends. They sit on the surface of the same piece of art.

*Your poems seem sophisticated, in that they're elaborating on wild concepts and using crazy words and having all sorts of fun. Yet they're surprisingly accessible. Do you think about that in terms of the audience?*

No. I ask myself if it's the style I want. Maybe the style I want means that the poem is accessible, and maybe not. But if it wasn't accessible, I'd have to say, Sorry, I'm writing this way anyway. Read a big swatch of "Biotherm" or "Second Avenue" by O'Hara, or "Notes Toward a Supreme Fiction," by Stevens. There's material in there that no one will ever figure out or get all of. And I say, So what? Who needs to get every smidge of the poem? In 1977, Kenneth Koch told the *New York Times* that, if you can get the exact words you want, you don't have to be concerned about the message (my paraphrase). It's a very far-out and subversive principle. He insisted on praising language and not just thought.

*What about particular themes or subjects in your poems? How do you decide on them?*

Of course I know very little about Renaissance Italy or Rousseau's France, but I've been reading recent work about each, and the results are "Sofonisba" and "Thérèse Levasseur." The expected poem about Rousseau might say "Man is born free, but everywhere he is in chains"—that's the important thing he taught us. But I want to write the kind of poem with bedspreads and corset stays and his lovely old dog Sultan—the kind of poem that is a surprise. I want to write the kind of poem that shows how conflicted Rousseau was: he loves his mistress and says he doesn't, he sneers

at her but says she has common sense. A pure poem could say the great idea, but I want to write the impure poem, full of ragged texture and the unexpected.

*That's the second dog you've mentioned! Why are dogs such rich subjects/speakers in your poems?*

Dogs are so important to our lives. I always want to meet other people's dogs, and I think dogs should go along on more adventures than they've been allowed to. Last year I went to a dinner party where there were eleven dogs, and it was really nice. So they belong in poems, too, as being necessary to our minds and hearts.

*Could you talk more about your distinction between impure and pure poetry?*

Sure. My poetry is impure poetry, as opposed to the work of Margaret Gibson, for instance, a good friend of mine. She writes pure poetry. The terms come from an old *Kenyon Review* essay by Robert Penn Warren. Pure poetry is fairly unornamented, and its message is foregrounded. For instance, Margaret has written about taking care of her terminally ill mother. I would never know how to write like that, and she wrote it while she was taking care of her mom! I just said, "Oh, Margaret, how did you ever write that?"

... I held you, talked  
nonsense, and sense, tried to tempt  
you with food. I force-fed you, a tube  
in the side of your slack jaw.  
("Out in the Open")

And she said, "That is the way I have to write it now." By contrast, I wrote "To Newfoundland" after my husband died, but I couldn't make pure poetry, even though there was a lot to say. I had to disguise the poem and the pain

with jokes and satire and terminology from the Middle Ages—I had to make it impure poetry. That carried me along, and the jokes carried the poem along. We can't always be thinking about doom, or about human rights, or about loss. People aren't strong enough to do that.

*So both types of poetry offer ways to deal with grief?*

Yes. Margaret and I had equally awful tasks, didn't we? We had to give up our beloved family members, and then we had to put ourselves back together.

*Can you talk about prose writers you're interested in?*

Well, John Cheever. He wrenches the language, which is grand—you really need to understand the grammar rules to keep them and break them. He is so high in the quality department. Maybe we need a set of prose figurines in the Pantheon. Cheever can go there. In addition to him, I like to read Henry Green, W.M. Spackman, and Nancy Lemann. From Green's radical style I learned that you can use an adjective where everyone else would use an adverb ("Edie, he appealed soft"). It makes a moment of surprise and physicality. I learned from W.M. Spackman, especially his *A Presence with Secrets*, that when in doubt add food and clothes. Nancy Lemann taught me the paratactic power of repeating what is in the speaker's heart, with variations—she creates these meditative voices with depth and devotion and anguish. And her diction is so fabulous—"wrecked," "debris," "glamorous but sozzled." Everyone should read Lemann, especially *Sportsman's Paradise*.

*Does a poet like James Merrill interest you in terms of his emphasis on style?*

He was a very, very gifted stylist, and so learned. He read all other poetry and internalized it all. And he was able to make so many and such highly crafted works in various old forms. But I also admire him for bringing in lots of stuff from today, too, including conversational diction along with

august and grand diction. There is a wonderful poem in which he is walking around New York, and he has a new jacket made of a fancy synthetic called Tyvek—the brand name is very foregrounded, which seems delightful. His poems often have such touches.

*A pragmatic resourcefulness?*

Yes. We love our products.

*Or a democratic inclusiveness?*

On the frontier.

*Do you think of yourself as an American poet, especially when writing about Europe or Asia?*

Yes, definitely. I like being an American, don't you?

*There is a cosmopolitan feel to your poems as well as this very grounded sense of Americana running through them. Maybe it has to do with the way your poems travel in terms of subjects.*

It's important to demythologize the old fancy subjects and laugh at ourselves; we shouldn't take ourselves too seriously. We certainly have to keep looking at the world in a new way, as Stevens said. We can't look at the Day of Judgment in the old way; it simply ain't true.

# THE FAT BABY

*Caroline Knox*

the fat baby is in her own thought  
she is rocked on her self  
she is her basket

her fingers make a star for themselves  
around anything

a rabbit is inside her    or is that milk  
if milk    how fuzzy



# THE CRYBABY AT THE LIBRARY

There was a crybaby at the library.  
Tears were pouring heavily down his face.  
He had omitted to do his math  
and thought of the anger of his teacher  
as the tears fell on his knitted  
mittens between the fingers and thumb.

It is raining all over inside the library.  
Parts of the brick walls are curling up  
and plaster is falling on the heads and beards of students.  
It is very dangerous for the books.  
The rain comes down from every beam  
and the professors do not know whether they should wrap  
their articles in themselves or themselves in their articles.  
The beautiful new botany professor who is only twenty-six and has  
marvelous dark eyes  
has makeup running down her face as she runs out the door.

A precious incunabulum inside a glass case  
is swimming gently as if in a dishpan.  
Tiny letters and pieces of gold that were put there in 1426  
are lifting off and turning into scum.  
The assistant librarians are afraid to use the telephones  
because yellow sparks are coming out of them.  
Several young men go up to the attic, saying that the trouble may be from  
up there.  
The electricity goes off and people are standing  
between the floors in dangerously wet elevators.

The librarians' Kleenex and aspirin are wet and are melting into each  
other in the desk drawers.

The Shakespeare professors come out of the Shakespeare Room  
and look around and go back in again; they must stay with the ship.

Fog is rising like rugs between the bookstacks.

People are laughing in a brittle way to disguise their well-grounded panic.

The botany professor is a redemptive figure.

She goes to the Maintenance Department and reports what is happening  
in the library.

Eventually the Maintenance Department goes over and fixes things.

The crybaby is definitely *not* a redemptive figure—he sits

still self-absorbed and shivery, and crying and crying,

and not at all trying to catch up on his math, nor even trying to fake it,

and all the time waves of water dash over his Bean boots

and up onto his lap, splashing his notebooks.

For the impending disgust of his teacher is foremost in his mind

as tears are foremost on his cheeks, where he sits crying and crying in the  
library.

# BECOMING GIRL SCOUTS

I am afraid we will fly up  
flap up we are so full of worms  
and our skins aren't any longer pink  
or sticky but all wings. I'm afraid we will—  
we're going higher; and we were so recently  
doing these same muscular things  
on the nice grass and the brown tree.

My, the ingenuous broad bulk of the leader  
shifts on her chair on the stage, and we'd better  
zoom over to the public rite which is now beginning.  
My goodness, will I land in her lap?  
Nope, she's standing, she's reading the lines that right now  
are turning us into new creatures! new green birds!  
Can you beat that, you guys—  
down there, that terrible onerous regeneration of feathers!

# SLEEPERS WAKE

Karen made a poem  
walking to rehearsal  
about children making angels  
seeing angels in the chimney flames  
Karen is the tall one  
with braids down her back  
She's old enough to be  
like a lady and have the braids  
on her head like a princess

This is the song called *Glory in the  
Highest*, it has to be loud  
It's just about all one note  
and we have to hold our mouths right  
for this one especially, *Glory*  
I'm sorry for the altos  
They have to sing O on A  
for bars and bars  
Karen is the solo, she is a snob

The breathing  
is theatrical as all getout  
There are almost no crescendoes  
We're so loud now  
we couldn't make one anyway  
Not one of us knows anything about it

but we have to sing in German  
and over again in English  
translated by Henry S. Drinker:

*Wake awake for night is FLAAAAAAAAAH-*  
*ying. The watchman on the height*  
*is CRAAAAAAAAAH-*  
*ying. It's Cantata No. 140*  
Wachet auf by J. S. Bach with an extended  
(is it ever) chorale in the middle

Going home in the snow is boring  
It's so dry and dark and cold  
I am a fabulous robot  
We boot the snow and squeak it and shower the others  
Karen will tell, she can mind her own beeswax  
and just like the dark in summer, spring and fall  
Mom and Dad will do their boring joke

SHADRACH MESHACH AND TOBEDWEGO

# HU-KWA

Visiting us at Macao, which is subject to Portugal, Hu-Kwa the Hong merchant, handsome and aged, sits in the spaciousness of his portly barge, which moves slowly in the waters like a huge animal. Plants line the gunwales and hang from the upper stories. They may be katsura and little altheas. His clothes are the Chinese blue of many rugs, almost black it holds so much dye. The square mandarin badge of his calling, the tea trade, covers his chest. It shows a stylized bird in near-flight. Such a bird appears on screens in China as well, and on trays carried a hundred years ago to Europe. Gray beads hang around Hu-Kwa's neck. All Chinese work is piped and tipped and bordered wherever possible, no matter in the practice of what art. I admire to my visitor the landscape and seascape—the paleness and blandness of the fiber-paper houses everywhere around us in Macao and along the water. Many favored cats walk around Hu-Kwa as he sits in the barge and invites me aboard.

“These paper houses render external nature more spectacular,” he says, handing me a cup. It is my dish of tea. I drink the infusion of the costly herb.

“One reason I have come to China,” I say, “is to learn about what happened to St. Francis Xavier.”

“He came to Goa,” says Hu-Kwa.

I have made a haiku on Xavier, and I offer it now.

He brought the Godhead  
here to the paper mountains;  
to rice, silk, and tea.

My visitor laughs, surprised and I hope approving. As I am a woman, I cannot go to Whampoa and Canton. Ha Nang is the great resort of the Hong merchants. Western women do not go there. Half around the world I have come to sit and do nothing, relatively speaking. But Hu-Kwa brings

me the paintings of the houses and gardens, paintings by Spoi Lum, Lum Qua. Su Qua. They are views of Hu-Kwa's garden, his bridge, its canals, his summer houses. My belief in their existence is distanced by the ebony frame around each painting. I might be looking at the work in either Greenwich or any Norfolk. The frame is alive with tiny figures of dragons amid vines, whose eyes are an astonishing white! Someone has carefully been dusting each, so that the dragons and vines gleam. Parts of a sonnet on the same:

Half the globe away from where the ship  
Lotos set sail, Fairhaven, Capn Scott,  
We ride in Macao anchored to the spot.

.....  
.....

Hu-Kwa brings me the paintings of gardens and house.  
His gates are guarded either by dragons or chows.

This is the curve of the vermilion lip  
Of a porcelain holding lilies that seem to flame.  
This is a celadon vessel holding the same,  
An urn so useless and beautiful as to be  
Suited to storing only the air we breathe.

A clumsy and sentimental first effort. The garden itself appears (from one of these paintings, mind you) to have a fine old tree called *Paulownia tomentosa*. Count Thunberg found the species. He was such an old family friend of Linnaeus the great. Thunberg named it for a Russian princess, but it is an entirely Chinese tree. The enormous flowers are like heavy blue lanterns and like hyacinth blossoms. The flowers appear before any leaves. The blue is very cool, again the blue of cloth which the silk makers can get. All the Chinese call all the Americans English French and Dutch by these names: Foreign Devil and Barbarian. Well, most of us call all of them Heathen and Heretic. One such holds over me a silk parasol made of yellow tassels. Parasols are in all the pictures—gray tassels, scarlet tassels (for war?). In the

comfortable, rocking barge, and in the paintings we look at, I covet Hu-Kwa's flower pots. Many of them I could not lift. Some seem to hold spray orchids. My precious sister has much to say in England on paper on the absorbing and interrelated subjects of flowers, silks, paint, and colors. I have much to say on the subject of dogs. These lines from her reached me at Jakarta.

*Darling Seafarer,*

Yesterday I returned to the country from London, where I bought two bolts of corn-colored silk. It is double-faced damask and is over two meters wide, as from a special reconstructed loom. Because of its double facing, there is no need to line the cloth at all. The pattern on one hand is ivy with rambler roses in wide stripes, vertically intertwined with one another. In the opposite weave, forming a sort of tattersall, is a pattern of elves and dragon flies drinking from fairy cups. The background behind these two competitive and complementary patterns is a water silk and moiré, with slubs of raw silk now and then. Part of the cloth's corn color comes from an iridescent warp of almost white thread fed like a wick into the warm, lemon-like woof. It is an icy color as well, perhaps from the proximity of Lyons (where it was made) to the Alps. Tea may have been used, too, to achieve the very mild tone. The selvedge is the same only more intense: medallion figures like coins. But these crackle and do not ring, as real coins do.

Barge is hardly the term for the boat. It is a little world: plants, animals, people, food, clothing, art. The only government aboard is Hu-Kwa's word. To me recently a famous salt, at dinner: "Hu-Kwa allies himself with the enterprising Americans, as an equivoise to the somewhat overbearing and pugnacious English East India Company." There are porcelain dogs and real dogs here. The porcelain ones are yellow ochre, with large, shiny turquoise Blowsabel ringlets, of all things. The real dogs are chows, red and black.



This red one, called Wind Orchid, is holding in his many perfect pointed teeth a long white silk cord which had been attached to the gong mallet. Wind Orchid has untied the Gordian Knot and has distributed thousands and thousands of snippets of silk all over the decks. Many Shih-Tsu are here, too. Hu-Kwa does not scold his chow, but says to me, "I will tell you of Mr. Ward, in addition to Xavier. Xavier vanished like the moa. Mr. Ward went far, far inland, up the mountains to see plants. This ship is Mr. Ward's." He indicates suddenly a junk that seems to be made of fans. "Mr. Ward made a device for carrying all his plants healthily across the sea. The device is called a Wardian Case now. It has tight-fitting shelves and doors, and it produces a climate. A Chinese might have invented and constructed the Wardian Case," says my host with reverence. The junk is shipshape and quiet. So are we. We rock. I take from my pocket more of my sister's letter. She continues travelling in England and writing what she sees, crossing her lines. She doubles, incidentally, as my twin, even at tennis, and thus I should think as my double.

Today a boy sang in the street for coins a ballad enacting a drama or melodrama, an odd craggy group of stanzas imported from America to England if you please. The action takes place in Springfield, on the Massachusetts frontier, in the Revolution! and yet I heard it here today.

On Springfield Mountain there did dwell  
A likely youth 'twas known full well  
Lieutenant Myrick's only son  
A likely youth near twenty-one

One Friday morning he did go  
Down to the meadow for to mow  
He mowed around and he did feel  
A poisoning serpent at his heel

When he received this deadly wound  
He dropped his scythe upon the ground  
And straight for home was his intent  
Calling aloud still as he went

'Twas all around his voice was heard  
But unto him no friend appeared  
They thought he did some workman call  
But Timothy alone must fall

At length his careful father went  
To seek his son in discontent  
And there his only son he found  
Dead as a stone upon the ground

'Twas the seventh of August, year sixty-one  
This fatal accident was done  
May this a warning be to all  
To be prepared when God doth call

Springfield is such a very small, remote place! The mountain is a faint mound at the foot of the Berkshire range. You may suppose that I copied down these verses intently, without knowing exactly why. Fortunately the child sang the song over and over. Why does the father seek the son, and whose is the discontent? Why is Myrick *père* a Lieutenant? Is he a Tory or a Patriot? I will kindly think Patriot. The song is too early to be connected with the events of the Revolution. Why is Myrick *fils* called a likely youth twice? Why must this event take place on Friday? Is it a crucifixion? or a bucolic Sacrifice of Isaac? Is Timothy mowing merely timothy? Does the heel have anything to do with an Achilles heel? How could his friends possibly think he was calling workmen? Where were they—but what could they have done? Is this an Agony in the Garden? In what sense is the father careful—

full of severity or full of woe? Why is Myrick *fil*s an only son? Does he have sisters? Write me your answers and questions and doubts. The curious corollary is that many many Londoners stood transfixed by the song and stayed to hear it several times.

Now a bewhiskered carp, like the ultramarine cousin of the dragons of the picture frames, coils in a fishbowl by the gunwale on which we lean, Hu-Kwa and I, looking forward toward the delicate junk just mentioned, in the mouth of the Boca Tigris River (an intrepid Portuguese name). The pattern on the fishbowl once centuries ago signified leaves of the tea crop, but with much recopying it has become merely crosshatching. The carp looks at and past me as I at and past it.

"See this oarsman, American lady. This oarsman is Mr. Ward. He approaches us from his junk by water." It is so. Mr. Ward bows from the waist in his shallop, if that is what the tender of a junk is called, without pitching into the deep. Minions help him aboard.

"Small, aristocratic dogs!" he cries, warming to the subject *sur le tapis*. "May I tell you that my mother knew a lady whom the Emperor esteemed so well that he sent her all unannounced a gentleman-in-waiting, to give her a puppy! a Pekinese not six months old." Mr. W. pauses to shake hands with me and to ingest tea. "Tiny and glazed eyes—you can guess why, inducing *best* behavior. On a silk pillow, a gift from an immortal."

"An immortal dog," says Hu-Kwa.

"In my own view, it is plants that are immortal. Think of the monocotyledon, and the dicotyledon, and know the perpetual motion of the plant world;" so Mr. W., resting on a garden seat, which is barrel-shaped and painted with flaming pearls and bats, chasing each other at random.

"We have been speaking of St. Francis Xavier," says Hu-Kwa.

"So many people," reflects the arrival, "have names that end in X. Lord Pollifax. Ajax. Astyanax. Sycorax. Or diseases: anthrax, pox. Places: Appomattox. Plants: Styra<sup>x</sup>, laryx, Tamarix. But how many names *begin* with X? So few. Xerxes. Xanthippe. Xeno. And Xavier. But Xavier vanished like the moa and the dodo. I once saw a moa and a dodo, actually, in a house in

London, very elaborate: there were extra rooms off the principal rooms, and stair landings which were rooms in themselves. These had long windows and window seats and bookcases, pillows, and jars of peppermints. There were plants and little caged birds, pets. There was a globe in one such landing, and in another a stuffed dodo and a stuffed moa, those extinct creatures. But still the children in this house, although crowned with specie, wept and wept often."

There is no response to this. The boat lolls; the weird, nautical shadows grow tall. Two black Shih-Tsu swerve around the windlass, toppling a baluster vase as the silence is fractured. Huge shards and splinters surround us. "Oh, good," says Mr. Ward. "Now we can hold an election."

"Ah," says Hu-Kwa, "I will tell you the history of Wind Orchid. You notice that chows closely resemble not only dragons but bears. Long ago a bear-like creature lived in gelid Siberia. The glacier brought the dog south to us; chronicles tell us so. Look at dear Wind Orchid, with his short legs and massive body. A wind orchid is a cloud—a gift, soft and ubiquitous. But evil spirits fear the dog's blue-black tongue. That is why the chow is the guardian of the gates. Furthermore, the breed was present at the creation of the world. The chow's tongue is blue because he was allowed to eat the pieces of blue sky that fell from heaven as the stars were being set in place! One by one!"

Mr. Ward gazes on our host. "A thousand thanks for the chrisom of black leaf *in convivio*."

All the porcelain fragments seem to have been swept away by someone. I say: "I would give anything to see a dodo."

Mr. Ward says: "You can. There is a stuffed specimen in the science museum near Yale College. The museum is called Peabody. In binomial nomenclature, the bird is a *didus ineptus*. Dodo in Portuguese means 'simpleton.' Here is my card. Show it to one of the curators. He'll bring you to the dodo."

# THEMES PHYSIOLOGICAL AND ANATOMICAL

*Leonardo da Vinci*

Figure to show how catarrh is caused.

Tears.

Sneezing.

Yawning.

Trembling.

Epilepsy.

Madness.

Sleep.

Hunger.

Sensuality.

Anger when it works in the body.

Fear likewise.

Fever.

Disease.

Where poison injures.

Describe the nature of all the limbs.

Why the thunderbolt kills a man and does not wound him, and if the man blew his nose he would not die. Because it hurts the lungs.

Write what the soul is.

Of nature which of necessity makes the vital and actual instruments of suitable and necessary shapes and positions.

How necessity is the companion of nature.

Figure to show from whence comes the semen.

Whence the urine.

Whence the milk.  
How nourishment proceeds to distribute itself through the veins.  
Whence comes intoxication.  
Whence vomiting.  
Whence gravel and stone.  
Whence colic.  
Whence dreaming.  
Whence frenzy by reason of sickness.  
Why it is that by compressing the arteries a man falls asleep.  
Why it is that a prick on the neck may cause a man to drop dead.  
Whence come tears.  
Whence the turning of the eyes when one draws the other after it.  
Of sobbing.

—translated from the Italian by Edward MacCurdy

# CIRCADIAN

*Joanna Klink*

Dividing time equally between earths, there in the coldness  
pulling south, blue-flooding dusk, a few stars.  
You are irreducible, there where you stand  
and all the mountains dropping into water.  
To what else would you give such care?  
Each thing made in the moment we hear.  
I understand when the winds rinse ice across the mountains  
and the mountains throw out their rock and burden, and the light  
and the feel of the light are the beginning of what we know.  
How close can you come?  
Come into the world again.  
Birds are moving through sky.  
One may be flying below roof-level.  
It rises when there are breezes.  
One night and division sets in, two and we wonder  
*what pardon*, three and you are sleeping poorly.  
Simplicity remembering there never was a time.  
There never was a time a time prefacing spacious disquiet.  
There never was a below sea-level where the bird  
flew warmly in water. There never were stars  
bobbing on the surface or stars sinking.  
The fish dream as the stars fall past them.  
The bird seeks a place to land and cannot, in the swell of tides,  
in the shallow sandstops, find it. All freedoms  
pulling us down. The flocks of geese  
swim in the light-flecked night, and bring stories of arrival.

# THEY LIKED IT BECAUSE THE WIND BLEW, AND BLEW THE BIRDS ABOUT

## *Cal Bedient*

~ child, dress in the excited. You could be next. You waterfully, get a sea on.  
You happen. You so already:

~ The spirit of the county, I've seen her. A lizard doing pushups on a rock,  
pulsing with her whole being. Eying the coffee grounds of my offering in  
the forest of the south field.

She's bright as radishes in water.

*Walter, come see the cranes light the swamp.*

~ Once it had all to be "taken up" somehow, eye pony stumbling through the  
ding bush.

I gained the summit and beheld the ample plain below and where the village  
had been the heads of Indian women and children stuck on poles.

*O walt,*

your earwig genitals,  
your bolt that fried the plains.

~ Is there still unusedness here? Half-lung of the wideness breathing?  
One minute forest in the extra pencil cedar fragrance?

~ Wet Floor signs in the reality-mopped areas.

The president had a large one, he invited me to blow on it.  
Candle of the birthday of the country.



~ "Death's seeds move in the year," screams packed into mud, dark  
pounding every little quality. Sniping starlight, exploded nest of flesh,  
that one a soldier, this other to be arranged afterward.

What makes the meaning (have that meaning  
is the size of the Impropriety.

Showdown at Iron Triangle. "... the enemy, thanks to accurate and timely  
intelligence . . .," go singing, come to Jesus.

The dispensary closed at the end of the century.

~ Who took *mi lírica sombra*? Affection is no longer the minute's danger.  
O day edged with the vanity of tracks, who often made me cry, come  
marry and well our hangdog towns, take us as the wind these trees ("I  
do get wonderful action into them don't I").

~ Gray clouds over Idaho, flop on in your unbuckled galoshes.

~ The woolly moon of the sheep, the udder moon of the cow:  
why go back now out of the differences?  
The bobcat hums an umber motion in the snow.  
Climb higher, to Lake Dorothy, rests her oars among the mountains,  
girl bursts of windy mm-hmmms. Today's rose  
hipped, oh why go back now out of the differences?

Next question.

~ Told you the cow in the meadow, the cow in the meadow, is her song.

~ We had climbed the stairs with longer legs than the English  
on the stage set against an Indian paintbrush sky.

This American loneliness—tastes right bitter, don't it?  
"I'm goin to have to kill the sumbitch stole my horse."

# POSTCARDS FROM THE VIENNA WOODS

*Mark Wunderlich*

From the burning fields, the smoke rose up, whip-thin in traces,  
moving toward the city, confirmed by radio reports.

Behind the post office, on the little castle plaza, a covered corridor where  
men slept,  
their clothing like compressed felt, warmed by their sleeping dogs.

She said, "We have not had an American here since the war,"  
and holding the twitching rabbit by the hocks, separated its neck bones.

The mother returned home with her husband, scolding her three girls  
through tears  
for using all the butter. "You are selfish girls. I pity your poor husbands."

On the castle plaza, at noon, a drunk pisses in a fountain.  
Mothers put their bodies between the spectacle and their children.

"I am not a real German," she insisted. "My mother is from Austria."  
The sun crossed from the window and lit her red hair.

A man followed me up the stairs out into the street. The moon  
unhooked its tallow figure from the cathedral's green lit spire.

*schweigen keep or be silent, to say nothing of, not to speak of,  
pass something over in silence, make no reply*

I walk more slowly so the man can catch up. His steps chafe  
the cobblestones, echo slightly in the wet air.

I will let him touch me, though we'll never exchange names.  
"It is all better to be impersonal, no?" he asks, the grass staining his trousers.

The city absorbs a petty theft, an unsigned letter.  
You remain sleeping. I mark steps toward the door.

# CHECKED OUT OK

*Corwin Ericson*

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF AMHERST, MASSACHUSETTS AS SELECTED FROM THE POLICE BEAT OF THE *AMHERST* *BULLETIN*

12:20 p.m. ~ A man digging up dirt and crawling on the ground near the intersection of North Pleasant and Pine Streets checked out OK, police said.

2:19 a.m. ~ Youths hanging out and collecting rocks on North East Street were gone when police got there.

10:14 a.m. ~ A loud whining type noise heard on Teaberry Lane was quiet when police got there.

8:41 a.m. ~ A squirrel that was acting oddly on North East Street was gone when police got there.

11:25 p.m. ~ A vehicle that left Village Park at a high rate of speed was gone when police got there.

12:58 p.m. ~ Police found a T-shirt on fire on the side of Belchertown Road.

11:31 a.m. ~ A Village Park resident told police that a man looked at her strangely.

2:17 a.m. ~ A group of people who wouldn't leave Pruddy's American Restaurant were gone when police got there.

7:24 p.m. ~ Police calmed down residents at The Boulders who were yelling and screaming after seeing a mouse in their apartment.

10:20 a.m. ~ A Hard Walk bicycle found on Salem Street was turned over to police.

5:11 p.m. ~ A man who parked his vehicle near the police station and put on a pair of gloves when he exited checked out OK.

7:29 a.m. ~ A woman wearing only a T-shirt on her upper body and attempting to scale the chain-link fence surrounding the high school athletic fields near Triangle Street was gone when police got there.

4:19 p.m. ~ Two T-shirts valued at \$12.99 each were reported stolen by a shoplifter from The Wearhouse on Triangle Street.

8:33 p.m. ~ After receiving a complaint from a resident police spoke with a woman who was wearing only a bra on her upper body while working at The Wearhouse on Triangle Street.

9:41 p.m. ~ Two suspicious-looking men wearing puffy winter coats walking on West Street were gone when police got there.

9:15 p.m. ~ A golden retriever by the side of Montague Road was just taking a nap and had not been hit by a vehicle.

10:53 a.m. ~ A man licking the pavement on Main Street in front of Subway was gone when police got there.

10:49 a.m. ~ An Alpine Commons resident told police that a sign reading "open" has been placed on a balcony there.

2:36 a.m. ~ An amateur radio operator in South Amherst told police that he was worried about interference that his radio was picking up.

5:01 p.m. ~ A man crawling on his belly at the intersection Meadow and North Pleasant Streets was gone when police got there.

9:33 a.m. ~ A man licking the locks on doorways of apartments on North Pleasant Street was gone when police got there.

8:51 a.m. ~ A woman crawling on Northampton Road was gone when police got there.

9:55 a.m. ~ A man waving at passing traffic in front of the Spirit Haus was gone when police got there.

6:10 a.m. ~ Police received a report that "punk rapists from Albany, N.Y." were coming to Amherst to kill women on the Town Common. Police determined that the person making the report has mental problems.

2:01 p.m. ~ A Greenwich Road resident reported receiving a phone call in which a person spoke in an angry tone.

9:21 p.m. ~ A person told police that a slippery substance was placed on the sidewalk near the Unitarian Church. Police determined that the substance had been placed by the Department of Public Works to provide better traction for pedestrians.

7:46 p.m. ~ Brandywine Apartments residents told police that a man and a woman were attempting to sell pies door-to-door.

A snowman was vandalized January 29 at 9:20 a.m. at a Hadley residence. Police said that the snowman's head was knocked off, and that a broomstick with a stuffed monkey's head was stuck on the snowman in its place.

1 a.m. ~ People fighting in front of the Monkey Bar were calmed down by police.

A Sunderland resident was nearly the victim of what police are calling a fund-raising scam. Police said the woman received a phone call Feb. 5 at 12:15 p.m. from a person claiming to be collecting money for "Promote Operating Under the Influence Week."

March 2 at about 2:30 p.m. the owner of a car towed earlier from the UMass campus tried to drive it the back way out of the Amherst Towing lot on Sunderland Road without paying the towing fee. When his car got mired in mud in a farm field he returned to Amherst Towing to pay

the fee and asked towing company personnel to tow him out of the mud. They declined, police said. The man told police he would try to get some friends to help him extract his car.

Master Cuts Salon in the Hampshire Mall filed a civil complaint against a client March 2 at 7:10 p.m., police said. According to police, the client who got a haircut at the salon, complained that the cut was too short, left the salon, returned and received a shorter cut but then refused to pay for the second cut.

10:69 a.m. ~ Footprints outside a Pine Street barn were just indentations made by falling snow, police said.

11:07 a.m. ~ People meditating inside a car parked behind a West Street home were sent on their way by police.

2:15 a.m. ~ A disturbance reported on Sunset Avenue was not found by police.

12:35 p.m. ~ An Amherst resident told police that his credit card was used fraudulently to purchase \$321 in calzones from D.P. Dough.

4:54 p.m. ~ A man seen walking in the middle of North Pleasant Street near the downtown fire station was later found holding a shovel near Rao's Roastery. Police said the man checked out OK.

9:55 a.m. ~ A Rolling Green Drive resident told police that his girlfriend had been receiving poems at her Hadley



workplace from a 60 year-old man. Amherst police advised the man to contact Hadley police about the problem.

A potato gun was used to fire a frozen orange through a fourth-floor lounge window in Webster Dormitory April 12 at 3:30 p.m., police said.

March 31, 5 p.m. ~ A Lake Wyola area resident told police that threatening graffiti was placed on his lawn. Police determined that the graffiti was just markings made by phone company employees.

A man pulled his car up to a gas pump at Cumberland Farms on Russell Street April 15 at 3:29 a.m. and stayed in the car for 15 minutes without getting out. Police said that when they arrived on the scene, the man was still in the car listening to a motivational tape.

4:47 a.m. ~ A Village Park man and woman arguing over the type of wedding band they would purchase settled their dispute when police got there. Police said the couple were eating nachos when they got there.

6:15 a.m. ~ A man photographing women moving furniture near a North Pleasant Street sorority was gone when police got there.

9:03 p.m. ~ A man wearing an all-black outfit who was walking near Village Park checked out OK.

11:48 a.m. ~ Police received a report that a South Prospect man did not report for work. The man was found at his home taking a vacation day.

A Meadowbrook Drive resident reported finding strange footprints outside the home and extending into the street Sunday at 7:05 a.m., police said. Police said the caller realized that the footprints, which had been painted in lime, was just a joke.

11:34 p.m. ~ Police checked on a Belchertown Road man on behalf of his mother and found him asleep. The man was told to call his mother.

2:38 p.m. ~ A black couch containing cash found on Jeffrey Lane was turned over to police.

1:21 a.m. ~ People walking back and forth on North Pleasant Street checked out OK.

4 p.m. ~ Police received a report from management at Bart's Homemade that a woman causing problems would not leave the store. The woman told police that she had asked for a piece of pie but was refused service because the pie was allegedly frozen. When she returned to the store she discovered that the pie, by that time defrosted, had been sold to another customer. She told police she may file a civil complaint against the store.

9:41 a.m. ~ Police determined that a child reported home alone at The Brook was actually an adult who was OK.

A person was reported bombing woodchucks or moles Sunday at 2:18 a.m. and June 3 at 11:22 p.m. in a Hadley neighborhood. Several residents were upset about noise related to the activity, according to police. Police did not say where the alleged bombing was taking place.

11:19 p.m. ~ A resident at The Brook told police that her dog was acting strangely. Police said the dog appeared to be fine.

5:57 a.m. ~ A beastly-looking dog walking on Triangle Street was gone when police got there.

12:17 p.m. ~ Police received a report that a vehicle was stuck in the mud in a field on Sunderland Road. The man driving the vehicle told police he was just driving into the field so he could get a tan.

7:01 p.m. ~ Youths hanging from a tree branch overhanging Northampton Road at Blue Hills Road were sent on their way, and the Department of Public Works was called in to take care of the branch.

8:45 p.m. ~ No trace could be found of youths reported to be playing in trees at Brandywine Apartments.

Two intoxicated men were reported fighting on Mitch's Island Sunday at 2:39 a.m. A caller reported that one man had set fire to the other man's tent, and that one of the men left the island in a boat. Police said no one was on the island when they got there.

11:42 p.m. ~ A moaning sound coming from a Belchertown Road home was quiet when police got there.

1:15 a.m. ~ Police determined that an erratic operator on Main Street was just a bad driver.

5:50 p.m. ~ Police received a report that someone let loose a pet snake to swim in Puffer's Pond. Police determined that the snake was living in the wild and it left when police got there.

11:22 p.m. ~ Police removed fluorescent post-its with obscene messages on them from the walls of the Bangs Community Center.

Two Amherst women called police an hour apart on the morning of July 12 to report receiving telephone calls from a man who asked them to participate in a survey and then went on to ask improper questions about their feet. They were each advised to contact Bell Atlantic's annoyance bureau.

9:57 p.m. ~ A woman receiving phone calls from people she described as "giggling teens" was given advice by police.

5:03 p.m. ~ A woman pushing a stroller and talking loudly to herself and was seen in the Amherst Carriage Shops parking lot. The woman was OK police said.

12:40 p.m. ~ A woman told police that she saw a father using obscene language in front of his young daughter while walking through the West Cemetery. They were gone when police got there.

11:23 p.m. ~ Children riding Big Wheels on the sidewalks at South Point Apartments were gone when Police got there.

11:43 a.m. ~ Police kept the peace between a girlfriend and boyfriend arguing at a residence at The Brook. Police said one threw a baby rattle at the other.

2:03 a.m. ~ A woman screaming "I should have left you a long time ago" in the middle of Village Park was calmed down by police.

1:10 a.m. ~ People who had been splattered with eggs while at Groff Park were sent on their way by police.

Aug. 13, 3 p.m. ~ Police received a report that a person, possibly dead or just in need of medical assistance, was lying in the backyard of a vacant Schoolhouse Road home. The man, who said he was just practicing his singing, agreed to leave the area.

2:12 a.m. ~ Police issued a verbal warning to Main Street residents playing loud music after a neighbor complained of "bad singing" coming from the residence.

9:19 p.m. ~ Police checked on a vehicle parked at the Belchertown Road Cumberland Farms to determine if the driver was wanted by police. The man driving the car was not wanted, police said.

1:08 a.m. ~ Police checked the security of a downtown building and found it secure.

8:04 p.m. ~ A Puffton Village resident told police that his neighbor took his bicycle more than a year ago and painted it black.

9:42 p.m. ~ An East Hadley Road resident reported that her son's black mountain bike was stolen.

1:22 a.m. ~ An Ann Whalen Apartments resident reported hearing what was described as "rhythmic banging." Police determined that an alarm sounding outside the building.

4:38 a.m. ~ A Hulst Pond resident reported hearing a spinning sound coming from the wall of her bathroom. Police determined that the noise was coming from her electric toothbrush, which was spinning inside a cup.

Police found a vehicle parked near fields on Hubbard Hill Road Aug. 25 at 11:30 p.m. The man and woman inside the car told police they were just chatting and looking at the stars.

9:48 p.m. ~ A man seen picking weeds from Cowles Lane told police that he had finished his work for the evening.

8:01 p.m. ~ A man, who was seen cleaning the center line of North Pleasant Street in front of Bart's Homemade, was gone when police got there.

4:42 p.m. ~ Police received a report that the "Entering Pelham" sign was removed from Belchertown Road. Police said it was still there when they got there.

A fox that got underneath a deck at a River Road home Sunday at 1 p.m. was left there by police.

3:08 a.m. ~ An orange-and-white cat in the middle of West Street near Kamel Hassan's was dead when police got there.

7:30 p.m. ~ Three people sitting in the middle of West Street near Kamel Hassan's were gone when police got there.

12:29 a.m. ~ A golf cart was seen driving around the Puffton Village apartment complex. Police said the people in the car were security personnel.

9:18 p.m. ~ A Nutting Avenue woman asked police to check her basement to determine if a person was living there. Police found no one in the cellar.

9:51 p.m. ~ Police received a report from concerned passersby that a man was using a knife to trim weeds near The Sub. Police told the man to return the knife to The Sub employees, who had loaned it to him for his work.

2:46 a.m. ~ A person found sleeping in a vehicle parked at The Boulders was going to remain there for the night.

4:03 p.m. ~ Police found a dog locked inside a vehicle parked at the Valley Medical Group. The owner was also in the vehicle and the air conditioning was on.

4:56 p.m. ~ A crow that was dying on Amity Street was gone when police got there.

Aug. 29, 7:10 p.m. ~ A chocolate Labrador retriever broke through the screen door of a Lakeview Road home and ate cat food, police said.

1:08 a.m. ~ A group of 10 to 20 people wearing no clothing running around outside the Boulders was gone when police got there.

Police said a person contacted them Sept. 25 at 12:41 p.m. to check a car for the presence of a chemical agent and radioactivity. Police found nothing out of the ordinary during an investigation.

Phineas Heywood, 19, of East Falmouth, was arrested Sept. 25 at 11:31 p.m. at Webster Dorm and charged with being a minor in possession of alcohol and furnishing a false name, police said.

12:55 a.m. ~ Three Bud Light cans found on Amity Street near the First Massachusetts Bank were recovered by police.

7:10 p.m. ~ Police spoke with a Village Park resident who was banging on the floor of his apartment. He told police he would stop the loud activity for the night.

8:16 p.m. ~ A Carriage Street woman who had not arrived home was just running late, police said.

2:07 a.m. ~ Regular foot traffic on Sunset Avenue was quiet when police got there.

1:52 a.m. ~ Several people told police they got minor scratches after pushing each other and yelling at other people on North Pleasant Street.



1:44 p.m. ~ Six adults whom an observer said were on the ground and making moaning sounds at Townhouse Apartments checked out OK.

8:30 a.m. ~ A dead animal, either a beaver or a dog, was found in the roadway at Village Park, police said.

5:11 p.m. ~ A Village Park resident found a doll hanging from a rope at the residence.

3:05 p.m. ~ A tow truck stopped on Triangle Street for pedestrians crossing in a crosswalk was rear-ended by a car, police said. The car, which sustained some front-end damage and a broken windshield was removed from the accident scene by the same tow truck. Police said a wet road contributed to the accident. No injuries were reported, according to police.

2:47 p.m. ~ A Village Park woman told police that she found a brownie underneath her license plate.

12:10 a.m. ~ Police checked a Nutting Avenue residence to see if someone was living in the basement. Police found no one there.

5:03 p.m. ~ A South Amherst resident receiving annoying phone calls from her mother was referred to the phone company for assistance.

1:29 p.m. ~ A woman who fell outside a Townhouse Apartments residence was seen being dragged back into her home by a suspicious man. Police determined that the man was just the son helping his mother.

1:28 p.m. ~ Police determined that two people arguing in the rear of Watroba's Liquors had an ongoing problem.

10:21 p.m. ~ A wailing sound behind South East Street residence was quiet when police got there.

3:30 a.m. ~ Police found a vehicle parked at Atkins Farms Country Market. The two women inside the vehicle told police that they were pretending to be Charlie's Angels and were going to steal a pumpkin from in front of the store.

Police received a report that a Rottweiler was carrying a small child in its mouth on Buffam Road Nov 1 at 7:15 a.m. Police determined that the object was actually a stuffed scarecrow.

12:47 p.m. ~ A child who ran away from the Crocker Farm School was returned when police found him.

8:11 a.m. ~ Police received a report that a vehicle traveling toward Belchertown had a child inside it who was not dressed appropriately for the cool weather. Belchertown police were notified about the vehicle.

12:06 a.m. ~ Strange noises being made in the parking lot next to a Kellogg Avenue residence were gone when police got there.

7:24 a.m. ~ A baby stroller left at Ren's Mobil Service was turned over to police.

7:31 p.m. ~ A woman sitting inside a vehicle parked on Juniper Lane told police that she was just meditating.

5:14 p.m. ~ Police are investigating a suspicious fax that was transmitted from a foreign country to Paige's Chevrolet.

6:11 p.m. ~ A woman inside a vehicle parked on Juniper Lane told police that she was just there to meditate.

6:18 a.m. ~ A suspicious man at the Exxon gas station told the store's clerk that he needed to purchase eggnog to prevent the effects of the poison his wife was giving him. The man, who was gone when police got there, was upset that the store did not sell eggnog.

4:04 p.m. ~ A Main Street resident told police that someone entered her residence and placed underwear inside her trash can.

11:38 a.m. ~ A loose dog running in traffic on Main Street in front of the police station was gone when police got there.

5:27 p.m. ~ A Christmas present fell from a vehicle near the corner of East Pleasant and Triangle Streets. The driver stopped the vehicle and retrieved the present.

5:07 p.m. ~ A man riding a "wobbly bike" in the area of the basketball courts on Rolling Green Drive was gone when police got there.

1:34 a.m. ~ A woman found sleeping in a car parked at the Big Y Supermarket told police that she was preparing for a long ride.

2:32 p.m. ~ A Morgan Place man told police that someone removed his trash from his trash box.

6:14 p.m. ~ A man standing in the middle of West Street was gone when police got there.

6:44 p.m. ~ Strange noises were reported coming from the basement of a home on Hedgerow Lane. Nothing was found when police got there.

10:10 a.m. ~ A North Hadley Road resident reported receiving strange e-mail and cassette tapes filled with spiritual music.

Police were called to the scene of a 6-foot snow sculpture in the shape of a male sexual organ Jan. 20 at 2:52 p.m., but were unable to dismantle it. The sculpture had been constructed on a grassy area across the street from the DB Mart on Triangle Street and the rear of Bertucci's on East Pleasant Street, police said. A DB Mart employee reported to police that many customers were complaining about it. When officers arrived, they tried to knock the sculpture down but it had iced over, and they called the Department of Public Works for assistance, police said. On Saturday morning, while crews were out plowing, a 10-ton loader broke up the sculpture said Noel Ryan, the superintendent of Public Works.

10:34 a.m. ~ A Montague Road woman told police that she encountered a suspicious man skiing who asked her strange questions about her dog.

11:29 a.m. ~ Police spoke to management at I Used to be a Tree about an icy sidewalk passing in front of their business.

1:32 a.m. ~ A verbal warning was issued by police to North East Street residents playing a loud stereo. When police returned, they issued a second warning and found the residents chasing a frog around their apartment.

11:53 p.m. ~ A Stanley Street resident told police that a prowler might be in her basement after the back door was pushed in. Police said no one was found but that a large possum may be responsible.

7:11 p.m. ~ Police assisted a Hillcrest Place resident in removing a sleeping possum from his porch.

A frozen turkey was found in the middle of North Pleasant Street in the area of several fraternity houses Feb. 1 at 11:05 p.m. Fraternity members questioned at the scene denied any knowledge of how the turkey got there, police said. An officer moved the turkey to the side of the road.

5:05 p.m. ~ Police checked on a pedestrian walking in the middle of Pelham Road. The person said he was just crossing the street and was not causing problems.

Feb. 8, 9:30 a.m. ~ Police checked the well-being of a resident. The person was vacationing in Florida, police said.

8:17 a.m. and 8:18 a.m. ~ Police checked on Valley View Drive and Chestnut Court residents participating in the "Are You OK" program. Both residents were fine.

# PHOTOGRAPH AT A PALACE

*Ann Choi*

Inside the wooden room  
where a king

in the new century  
could no longer call on blood

or books  
to keep time moving

in a circle  
his country plucked

renamed  
his courtyard turning into a zoo

a magpie brushes  
its body's edge

against wall after wall  
our guide strikes

her hand against a post  
and it flies out

into the grounds  
loud with cages

balloonmen popsicle carts  
children in sun hats

the grass  
hides my sister's feet

sunk in rubber  
shoes her mouth

a room of teeth  
in ruins

her eyes  
beyond the camera

spying a local bird—  
look how fast it circles

the crowded lot  
and returns back to us.

# SLEEPING WITH ARTEMIS

*Josh Bell*

I hadn't been that ashamed since  
the Spartiate festival of the Hyacinthids,  
and it was harder than we thought, sleeping  
with Artemis. We brought sandwiches;  
she brought arrows and stuck them  
fletching up in the sand. We were vastly  
unequipped. I looked to the heavens,  
like you will, and asked for guidance  
and a shield. To no avail. Furthermore,

the wine didn't help like we thought.  
She drank it down, cursed our mothers,  
and only got reckless, really, popped  
the blister on her heel, drew the bow,  
and, with both eyes shut, skewered  
Crissippus. We scattered like snacks.  
I believe it happened in that clearing  
by the stream, where much transpired  
as of late: two dead last April—the girl

who smoked flowers—that quiet kid who  
turned into bark. We should have known  
better, with the storied plants along the bank  
and the instructive constellations in the sky.  
Then she swept up out of the hedge like  
a jack-knifed lion, a moon on each shoulder,



but you read the report. Indeed, sir,  
we felt hairless, the offspring of mice,  
when she quoted Hemingway, then turned  
the forest to her wishes: leaves dropped

like bombs: branches shook: and where  
the hounds came from, no one can tell.  
From time to time, picking us apart now  
from the stream, knee-deep and eyeing  
the rushes for movement, she'd glance down  
to her shirt, but it was always someone  
else's blood. I remember her teeth  
weren't as straight as you'd think.  
But something about her was perfect.

# THE LITTLE BOX

*Vasko Popa*

The little box grows her first teeth  
And her little length grows  
Her little width her little emptiness  
And everything she has

The little box grows and grows  
And now inside her is the cupboard  
That she was in before

And she grows and grows and grows  
And now inside her is the room  
And the house and town and land  
And the world she was in before

The little box remembers her childhood  
And by most great yearning  
Becomes a little box again

Now inside the little box  
Is the whole world tiny small  
It's easy to put in your pocket  
Easy to steal easy to lose  
Take care of the little box

*—translated from the Serbian by Anne Pennington*

# ESSAY ON THE LITTLE BOX

Someone asks you what something in one of your poems, what the little box means. The question has made you dream about this poem, and your dreams have answered with a string of questions:

What is the little box? Or to be more exact: who is the little box? Is it a little bastard, and a strange bastard at that, whose human father may be known, but not the mother (who springs from a wooden and iron, a crystal lineage, or perhaps some other noble or common one)?

Is it a new kind of monster which does not, this time, represent the adultery of man with animal (it is not a siren, not a centaur), nor the adultery of animals with those of different species (it isn't a dragon, nor is it a unicorn)? Is it a *new* monster which represents the adultery of man with an object, with a machine (thus half woman, half machine), and which has appeared to replace the old starved, perhaps already extinct, monsters in the industrial meadows of our ugly dreams?

Or is it a demigoddess who, for the good of mankind, impregnated herself with the huge world as with a seed and who, afterwards, takes care of this world the way she might care for a child in her womb, not wishing to give birth to it?

Or is it, quite the contrary, a half-demon who, to destroy mankind, has stuffed the whole huge world down her gullet and who has smashed it to bits within herself, the better to torment it?

Is it perhaps guarding a treasure, is it its own treasure vault as well, hiding the entire world within itself and even making it smaller, the better to guard it?

Or is it, on the contrary, a jailer who is its own jail as well and who has locked up the whole world within itself, turning it into a dwarf to make it even more difficult for it to get away?

Or is it simply a human head, perhaps that slightly squarish head which has produced mainly boxes lately and which has now changed itself into a box, into a little box, plotting dubious miracles?

Or is it one of those openings in the cosmos that hide all around us—in your, in everyone's closet—which sometimes grow and sometimes shrink, like a mouth that is breathing with difficulty?

Or is it the emptiness of the world itself, which doesn't know what to do with the world or with itself, and *when* it begins something, *doesn't* know how it will *finish* it?

Or is it nothing but the objectified great temptation of man, this little box? The temptation which man admires and fears at the same time, but unfortunately cannot resist?

What is the little box? Who is the little box? Is it really *everything* your dream has enumerated here, or is it *none* of all this?

People ask you what your poem means. Why don't people ask the apple tree what its fruit, what the apple means? If the apple tree could speak, it would answer: Bite into one and you'll see what it means!

How are you going to drag a meaning out of your poem? How do you propose to squeeze out, pulverize or cook your poem to a pulp in order to offer the poem-juice or poem-powder or the poem in tablet form to *those* who ask you for it?

You could—just like that, for fun—write a poem about your poem. What a pathetic poem it would turn out to be! It would be something like an apple tree piecing together an apple from its stem, its branches and its leaves. Quite a few people would find that useful! But this proves precisely that you, just like the apple tree, have no business saying anything about your fruit! Doesn't it also prove, by the way, that you are nothing like your poems? Only your poems are anything like your poems, and they are given your name as their common denominator.

By the way, what does the apple mean? Why doesn't anyone give you an answer? Your poem means a secret which came into being somewhere inside you and ripened, and when it was ripe, you expressed it with the syllables of your language. If you had known what this secret meant, you wouldn't have made such an effort to let it be born, so it could live in the sun, among people and beneath the clouds. And it is up to others, not up to you, to find an answer to the question whether the secret can be figured out or only experienced, whether it can be conquered or whether you must finally submit to it, whether it can be opened, or whether one must agree to becoming its captive.

Your eyes follow your poem at its leaves; it has flown out of your hands; you remain silent, rest up a bit, or at least you believe that you are resting; you let go of your poem, so that it can become its own answer. You can speak about your poem only as a reader, for you are its first reader. But that does not mean in any way that you are the authoritative, the best reader. Among those who ask you for the meaning of your poem, there are certainly smarter, more experienced, and less biased readers than yourself.

You are asked how you make your poem. Why don't they ask the stone how it made the little stone, or the bird how it laid the egg, or the woman how she bore the child?

The stone (we say) cannot speak, no one understands the language of birds (or else we have *forgotten* it), and the woman will tell of her love, the path of her love, the circumstances of her love; and in the end she will be able to say *nothing* which would be an answer to the question. Or has anyone ever heard of a mother who had spoken of how she made her child's head, how she chose its mind and the color of its eyes, how she breathed a soul into it? You know there is no such person. She could not do that, but she would not stop claiming, because of that, that *she* and no other had borne the child.

In the same way you too cannot answer how you wrote your poem. You stand before this question as if made of stone, your head hidden under your arm (for you have no wings), your gaze concerned like that of a mother, you stand so helpless, so quiet and silent, like (or almost like) a stone, a bird, a woman. And if this answer, which they demand from you, were the *price* you had to pay for every one of your poems, you would probably stop writing poems. Or you would, worst of all, doubt whether you even wrote your poems yourself. (And this doubt, just between ourselves, wouldn't even be so unfounded!)

You will recount the ceremony that brings you to the poem. Basically you are talking about the behavior which precedes the birth of your poem, which means: the outer aspect of the poetic ceremony, the only one of which you are aware. If you are honest you will not be able to say anything to anyone about the *other*, mysterious aspect of the ceremony, which crowns itself with the creation of the poem and which completes itself in you. Because you know nothing about it, just as little as *those* people who ask you. Your role in creating the poem is the role of a middleman: you mediate so that the poem which is forming inside you can reach the light of day, so that it can survive in this light and can live and act without you or your help in the future. This is neither a small nor an easy task, but God knows what you can say about it: a task like any other, in *which* this main, decisive piece of work has already been completed in the worker himself, but without his knowledge.

You are often asked where you get the words for your poems. There are word-bones which can lodge in your throat. They can make you suffocate. There are word-embers that fall into your heart. They can burn you to death. There are word-snakes that coil in your head. Because of them you must learn to play the magic flute. There are many words that can do you harm. You should never treat words frivolously. And among others there are word-keys. These word-keys are the only living words from which you can make a poem. These words always come to you unexpectedly, but never accidentally. They appear like stars or entire constellations in the heavens of your skull. They shimmer among the other words and sentences that have nothing to do with the future poem. These words shimmer as omens of the poem. One must *recognize* only *these* words. They strike you with awe, as if they were not your words. And you remember them darkly, as though you had heard them somewhere before, only you can't remember where and when; and this memory will remain dark for you for ever and will not become clear even after you write the poem down.

The richer and more mature your experience is, the more it teaches you that the words of a poem come to you from their own source. And where else, do you think, are they going to come from? Where this source of living words (the key-words) exists, neither you nor anyone else can tell the people who ask this question. The only thing you know is that the path from this source leads through your heart, through your head, through your soul. And that gives you the opportunity to write a poem, to write *the way* you have earned to write. To be a poet means—more than anything else—to be human, to be a human being who releases the words for his poem from their source with his life. Without self-obliteration, there is no concentration, without concentration no inspiration, without inspiration no revelation, without revelation there is and can be no poem. Or at least there can't be a poem like the one you wanted.

And you are asked just as often: to whom do you address the words of your poem? You bring them back to the place you received them from, you return

them to their source. This time too, neither you nor anyone else can say where this source is. The only thing you know is that the path back to the source of the living word leads through the heart, through the head, through the soul of all human beings. And this in turn gives every human being the chance that he, too, may stand connected—through the words of the poem—with this life-giving source. In this, and in *nothing* else, does the communality, the love for mankind, and the humanity of the poetic act, of writing poetry, lie. Because every human being, not only the poet, has the daily need to speak with the source of the living word, but often does not know how to.

And for every human being, for every reader, the law applies that he earns the words of the poem if he wants to, that these words become his own. Otherwise he can stand above the poem as high as he wishes to, but the poem will never reveal itself to him. The words in the poem form a closed circle. You can see that they are dancing a circle dance, but you cannot see what center they dance around. The words of the poem make up an image of the source from which they sprang and towards which they will flow back again. The words, one could say, turn their backs on *those* human beings who bend over the poem. And a person can look them in the face only when he enters the circle-dance without those ulterior motives he is so proud of; only when he doesn't ask where the circle-dance of words will take him, and only if he doesn't turn around. Only in *this way* will the poem reveal itself to him: it will open up to him from the inside. There are no other entrances, no side entrances into the poem.

You are asked again and again why you write poems. To find out why you are *alive*—that is why you write poems. The living words spend the night, or spend the day, inside you, from time to time, on their endless journey to their source. Only in *them* do you see why you're alive. If it were not for *them*, you would *never* see what is *behind* the mountains which surround you. *Never* would you see *where* your field is, *nothing* could be discovered on it. Your sen-



tences would be nothing but mouthfuls of earth until you die, and *after* you die even more so. You would stagger across your field and bang your forehead on invisible walls with your eyes wide open.

You keep watch in the middle of this endless journey that leads right through you, and you wait for the living words. You go out to meet them and to bring them your gifts, the *only ones* you have: watchfulness and silence. With *these* you hope to give them food and drink. You prepare for them your naked breath so that they may feel at home in *it*, as under the tent of the heavens or in the subterranean depths, depending on which is appropriate for them.

You keep watch far from this source of living words; you've never seen the source, but it seems to you that you can hear something of its sound, feel something of its shape, see some part of its clarity in every one of your poems. You have no fear that this source could ever dry up. You have no fear that someone could poison it or plug it up. You know very well that this source cannot be muddled, for no curse, no evil enchantment, no stone could ever reach it and fall into its depths.

If you are keeping watch like this, in the middle of the path on which the living words come from their source, then it is for *this* reason: because you are afraid that this path might become deserted and overgrown, turn into a dense, impenetrable turmoil, or that it might sink under a thick, dusty layer of silence. Because then you would never write another poem again. Your forehead would change back into a gravestone, covering up an entire world. Under this stone would forever lie all you cannot see with the naked eye. And you would no longer know why you were alive, because no living word would exist to tell you.

You are asked, *you*, who have dedicated yourself to writing poems, where your place is. Your place is among people who have a daily need for the living

word of your poem. And precisely *because* you know that, you cannot remain silent with this word inside you, even if someone declares that you are a smuggler of things which do not exist. You must not silence the living word, even if someone declares you are a criminal in regard to *things* that really *do* exist. Because the spoken poetic word gives life to all human beings. The unspoken word, the word buried in flesh and silence, this same word rots, dissolves, and becomes a poison in all human beings, and can bring death to them. And this is where your responsibility to the living word begins in this time, as in all times. Today, when the very existence of this tiny, fertile star—whose shine should be mankind itself—is in question, today more than ever before, it is necessary that the living poetic word be heard.

Your place is in the long procession of people of your language who, in the course of centuries, have occupied themselves with the same strange task as you: they transform a little earth and a lot of sky, which they carried in their hearts, into a poem. They did not write poems because they felt like it, but because they did not wish to die. They did not wish to die, and they did not wish to see the human beings around them die. They turned the world into a poem to rescue it in that poem. For *them*, to write poems meant to love.

And you flatter yourself for nothing except for this. You know where, in the end, you stand beside your poem when you are done writing it. Your place is certainly not within the poem: just imagine you were to find, inside the apple, a bit of the earth that nourished the apple tree?! Neither is your place *behind* the poem: your shadow would fall on the poem and cloud it. Underneath your poem, deep under it, that is where your place is: like *that* of all nourishing earth.

—translated from the Serbian by Margitt Lebbert

# I LIKE WOOD, AND HEAVY THINGS MADE OF METAL

*Michael E. Craig*

Keep a teakwood head by the phone,  
and carry a pockmarked revolver  
to stand for the beginning of your adult life.  
I pulled mine up one day with a crab trap.  
Had been out trapping crabs.  
As I peeled back the weeds it grew powerfully beautiful.  
I left it on the hood of my car and went  
and made a phonecall. When I returned  
it was still there, where I'd left it, only  
I somehow wanted it less I don't know why.

Today you strike me as needing something.  
So take my ten-thousand pound typewriter, promising  
to love even the dust on its two turrets, cold  
brook beneath its footbridge. For here is an older,  
other world, taking almost forty sheep to make one sock.

A serious mist fills my eye. You  
have made me cry.

# IN PATIENT SPADEFOOT TORPOR, PERHAPS LISTENING

he waits, for he is a spadefoot. And as surely as men  
ride in the beds of pickups holding shovels, sometimes  
squinting, so too does the spadefoot. He is surrounded.  
An ant crawls across a dog biscuit. A baseball hat is mistaken  
briefly for a large mushroom. Nobody seems to ever tire  
of this. Then everyone gets tired at once, and night is quiet.

It is now that the spadefoot works his little leg.  
In time a hallway is made, and a woman,  
and we see the remains of a muffin left out on a plate  
by the window, which somehow holds for me all of Evening.

Rain falls on the world, and into the cracks, and into a teacup  
someone left on a fencepost. Each drop comes tapping the garden.  
A mudslide occurs and the spadefoot is swept away.

# SILVER DROOL

One plate of chopped turkey and seven  
hot buttered rums later  
and I'm back at the window staring out,  
only it's not as much fun anymore  
because I'm always doing this.

Toward me floats a young fly  
who has died in mid air  
like the tiniest paper cape  
tossed always down and  
never landing.

A poet should sleep  
in the grass, on his stomach,  
with his hands in his back pockets.

# SUBLIME CURRENCY

## *An Interview with Phillip Glass*

Phillip Glass is one of the most innovative and influential composers of the 20th century. His myriad orchestral works, operas, film scores and dance pieces have been essential to the development of ambient and minimalist sounds, and his fusion of Western and world music is among the earliest and most successful global experiments of its kind. This interview was conducted by his cousin Ira Glass, the host and producer of the Public Radio program *This American Life*, and later broadcast on NPR's *Fresh Air*.

*I should say before we start that we barely know each other.*

But we knew our relatives.

*Yes. We are first cousins once removed, which means you are my dad's first cousin.*

That's right.

*And the conversation that we had before this show was just long enough to play some Jewish geography in order to relieve you all of the burden of hearing it. And our families both lived in Baltimore. By the time I was old enough to be awake to anything, you had moved, first to Chicago and then . . .*

I was here in Chicago for about five years. From '52 to '57.

*And that was before I was born. By the time I was sort of awake enough to know that you existed, you were in New York and then in Paris.*

Yes.

*And then back in New York. I would like to start by talking about your musical development, because at the beginning it was very traditional. And I called up my dad and my uncle Ernie this weekend to ask if they had any special insight into your very early musical career.*

What did they say?

*They both produced exactly the same memory over the phone from opposite sides of the country. And it was you in a band uniform.*

Well, I was a flutist, so I taught people to play the—to play these little metal flutes.

*And what was your repertoire?*

Oh, I don't remember. It was just tunes that the bands played. It was just whatever was around. I was the leader and I played the Glockenspiel and then we had the drummers. So, that was our way of going to the games. And then after that I began playing in the school orchestra. And you know, this was actually a very important—I realize it in retrospect, because I played in the pit orchestra. In the schools in those days, they did little operettas and things of that kind, Gilbert and Sullivan, or whatever it might have been. That was the kind of fare that—but I was playing in the orchestra. And I am convinced that my first contact with theater music started here—I began to understand how themes worked, and how intermissions worked and—

*How the music would interweave with the—*

How the singers worked with the players and I did that from a very, very early age. And then years later when I was writing for opera orchestras I had a physical memory of being in the orchestra pit. And of course I was one of the two or three flutists in the orchestra.

*Your father owned a record store. First off, I've heard that you actually worked in the store sometime . . .*

I worked there from the age of 12, until I was in my '20s.

*And do you remember what music was playing and what music was—*

Well, all kinds of music. In those days you could—these were the old days of 78s and no one worried about all the scratching anyway so you could play anything. So, we played music all the time. I eventually became—by 15 I became the classical record buyer for the store and I learned a lot about it because I was the one that ordered the records because my father, Ben Glass—that would have been your great uncle—he, he was a self taught—he knew a lot about music, but he really learned it all by himself. He didn't have a music education background.

*But he played you songs and composers and—*

Oh, yeah.

*—said listen to this part, listen to this part.*

We had a very interesting collection of records at home. His story is interesting. He began actually—this is how it began. He began as a auto mechanic. And then at a certain—people started putting radios into cars. And so he began fixing the radios just the same way he fixed the cars, he learned how to fix radios. And then he got interested in radios and got rid of the cars and just had a radio shop. Then someone told him that he should sell some records in the radio shop and gradually over 10 or 15 years the part of—the record part—became bigger and bigger and bigger and at the end of his life—there was a tiny bench at the back of the store, and he used to fix radios there. So, he came to music that way. And what he had at



home—and he didn't know much about music—but he would buy these records and he would take them home. The ones that he couldn't sell, he would take home because he wanted to listen to them to see what was wrong with them. You know he said Well, if I could figure out what was wrong with it, then I would know what the other—so like Shostakovich string quartets.

*And why was Shostakovich not selling in Baltimore?*

Oh, we're talking about the 1940s. When—we're talking about pieces that were new at that time, and the idea of classical music was really the European 19th century Romantic tradition. So, we had—what we ended up at home with was a collection of very esoteric music. And we would listen to this and what happened is that, the more he listened to this music, the more he liked it. And he ended up liking all this strange music that no one else listened to. And then he became an advocate for this music and the people—I witnessed this many, many times—people would come into the store and he would try to sell them all this new music that—he would say I'll bet you've never heard this guy Britten. Now this guy Benjamin Britten is a really terrific composer and he would practically give these—push these records on people. And he had any number of people in Baltimore whose music—whose musical taste was formed by this kind of eccentric—I can remember this—these are the days when a record store, it was very different from—this was before you had the Sam Goody's record stores.

*Yes, kind of large and impersonal.*

This was a really mom and pop record store. You had—it wasn't very big.

*You must have thought at some point about what your father would think of your music.*

Well, I—he died of a car crash, an automobile accident I should say, in the

'70s. But he did live long enough to have—I actually saw my records in his store.

*So, what did he think of it? What did he say about it?*

I don't know. I didn't—I never, you know, a funny thing but I never asked him. It's a funny—you know fathers and sons have all kinds of things that they say or don't say. And I don't know, that was one of the things that we never talked about. But I was in the store and I saw that—and I looked in the modern music rack and it was there. And so—but you know, one of the reasons partly is that a lot of my orientation to music and my feeling about the way music functions in the world has a lot to do with the fact that I grew up that way.

*Hearing the music often . . .*

Well, it's not just hearing the music. I saw how music interacted with people. You know, people would come in with a very simple—people came in and they'd listen to music, and they'd learn by listening. And they—they explored things they didn't know. And it—and I witnessed this trans—I will have to tell you a really interesting story. Did I ever—I should tell you what my very first job in the store was. This was a really interesting job. You see in those days, those days of 78s, every record store had what was called—you had a—you had an allowance, a return privilege for broken records.

*Wait, if you would take the record home and break it . . .*

No, no, no, no. No it didn't work that way, Ira. No, if you were—if you had the store and some records arrived and they were broken . . .

*Oh, I understand.*

So, the merchant could return the records. It was called the return privilege. And it was a strict—it was something like—the way they figured it out they made it something like 5% of the records could be returned. Now what happened was that you didn't actually break 5% of the records, but you could return 5% of the records. So, what you had to do if you wanted to return records and get your money back, you had to break them.

*And that was your job?*

My brother and I worked on the weekends. We went down to the store and we were sent to the basement and we jumped on records.

*Good preparation for what was to come.*

That's a kind way of putting it.

*Well, no, no.*

So, I gradually worked my way up . . .

*And in 1954 you moved to Paris and you studied with Nadia Boulanger. Could I ask you to talk about what she was like and what you learned from her?*

Well, she was a—you know I don't like to talk—are there any students here in the room? I always get into trouble when I talk about it because actually she wasn't a very nice person. She was a wonderful teacher. She was probably one of the two or three wonderful teachers I've had. I consider Ravi Shankar to have been a wonderful teacher, and I still consider myself a student of his in a way. And we've done records since the days when I worked with him, and about the same time I was working with Boulanger.

*But Boulanger, what was she like?*

Well, she was—she was—she was extremely difficult. I had three or four lessons a week, one on different subjects. And she gave me enough work. By the way, I went there after I finished my work at Julliard and I was 26 or so when I went to Paris. That made me one of her older students. She really had younger people. So I went to Paris to study with one who was the great master of music technique, or counter-point, or harmony—of analysis. And she was extremely—how can I say—demanding from the first moment you walked in. For example if you arrived at the door of the apartment, if you were as much as a minute late, it was better just to go home. Because if you came in late, you were—you got such abuse. You were criticized on every level of your being and character and . . . and how could—what kind of person are you? Basically, if the metro was slow that day, or if you got off at the wrong stop, you just went home.

*And there was something that the students called "Black Thursday."*

Oh, yeah. That was the Black Thursday class. That was when she put—well we were convinced—well, I had a private lesson for counterpoint and harmony and I had—and it was a general lesson of analysis that all the students went to, maybe 30 or 40 people. It was not a very large living room, but she taught it. And then there was the Black Thursday class. And we were convinced that she put together her—eight of her students. She took the four best ones and the four worst ones, and put them together.

*But you couldn't tell which you where?*

But you couldn't tell which was which. By the time she got done with us, we were just—those lessons were devastating. They would go—those classes would go on for three or four hours. And they'd begin at about 9:00 and went to about 1:00.

*Describe a typical exercise.*

Well, I'll give you one. This is one that I was very fond of because it was so—sinister. You walked into the class and into the room, and we were all there for some time for sure, and on the piano would be a line of music written in tenor clef which is not a common clef, but you're supposed to know it. So, first of all there are seven clef, probably most of you know two if you know any—you may know three clef, but you're supposed to know clef and the first thing you do with her, is you learned all seven. And she said, Danielle, before we begin the lesson today, would you just play the harmony that goes with this melody. And Danielle would play the first chord and she would say, oh, my God, how can you play that chord? And she would say, OK, Paul you play it. And so she went through the room until we got the first chord right, and then we did the second chord, the third, the fourth and fifth. And finally, three or four hours later, she had beat us completely into this four part harmony exactly the way it was supposed to be. And then she said, well you know, she said, My dear children. She said, I really didn't expect to spend the day like this because in fact I thought you would know this. And she'd reach behind the music rack and pull out—it was the second movement of Beethoven's own piano sonata and basically she merely expected us to replicate exactly the voice leading that Beethoven had done. Of course if you knew the piece it would have been easy. But she picked—she picked something that no one knew. Actually it was kind of a miracle that we had done it at all. She succeeded—let's put it a different way. She succeeded in eliciting from us the exact voice leading of the original. It took four hours.

*Do you think that there's a pedagogical efficiency to terror?*

You know, I'll tell you—I don't know why she was like that, but she was. But I'd finally, after I had been there about two years, I finally figured out why I was there. It took me so long to—and we were having a lesson and I had come in with my harmonics and we came to a place in the music and she said, It's wrong here. And I said, Madam Boulanger, it's correct. And she

said, no it's wrong. And I said, but—and we took out the—I cited the rules of voice leading and said all these things are correct and there's nothing wrong with this. And she said, Yes, but if Mozart had done it he would have done it like this. And she played the correct version which was that perhaps the soprano was in the—the third was in the soprano instead of the root of the chord—whatever I had done, I had done it wrong. And she said, But Mozart would have—and then I said—and I looked at her and said, but the rules are right. She said, Yes, but it's still wrong. And I, and I was astounded—it was at that moment that I understood what she was teaching. And it was very interesting. I realized that she was teaching the relationship between technique and style. And without any doubt she succeeded. And I realized that what she was telling me then was that the style of Mozart is a special case of technique, that the technique was right, but what made it sound like Mozart was the choices, the predilections that he had to solve the problem in a particular way.

*In a different way than the rules would have you solve it.*

Well, no. He was within the rules too. He followed the rules as well, but he—she pointed out to me that whenever Mozart was in that situation he resolved the chord in this way. And even if the rules said it was possible to do it the other way, he—his particular—for example now let's put the question another way. If you listened to a measure of Rachmaninoff and a measure of Bach. And you know which is which without—you know immediately. And the question is why do you know that? And the answer is because they both are following basically the same rules of harmonic—voice leading for the—but what happens is that you have in your—in the course of your listening, you have taught yourself, you recognize that Rachmaninoff will always solve a certain problem a certain way. You may not say that to yourself, but your ear will tell you that. And that Bach will do it in his way. And you say, Oh that sounds like Bach or that sounds like Rachmaninoff, or that sounds like Stravinsky. And you're hearing the

predilection of the composer to resolve the technical problems in a highly personal way.

*From that point, how hard is it to design your own personal way of solving it?*

Well, this is the point. The other thing which she didn't say in words that day, but which I understood totally, was that in order to arrive at a personal style, you have to have the technique to begin with. In other words when I say that style is a special case of technique, you have to have the technique. You have to have a place to make the choices from. If you don't, if you don't have a basis on which to make the choice, then you don't have a style at all. You will have a—you will have a series of accidents.

*Talk about your first collaboration with Ravi Shankar, because that's one of the first times when your music took new direction.*

I was hired to notate. He was hired to write music for a film score and I was hired to be the translator and the notater on the music. And eventually the conductor. We had a—we were in a studio somewhere on the Champs Elysees, and there was a little orchestra of about 16 French musicians and they were waiting for their music.

*And they were supposed to play this Indian music, but they needed somebody to write it down for them?*

Exactly. I had to notate the music for them. And of course this—this was the second terrifying experience. The first terrifying experience was being with Nadia Boulanger. The second terrifying experience was being with Ravi Shankar. And these were happening at the same time by the way, because I was in Paris with Boulanger and I was also working with Ravi so I was between the two of these musicians and they scared me to death. I had met Ravi. I had no idea what Indian music sounded like. I—don't

forget this was 1963, 1964. By this time I was a—I was a master's degree graduate from Julliard and I had been studying with Boulanger already for a year. I was not—I mean I thought I knew—I thought I knew a little bit about music. And I listened to this music and I couldn't make heads or tails of it. And so I went to see Ravi and said, Mr. Shankar I'm going to be notating the music, I'm a little worried, could you start showing me how this music works? And he said (and the session was like in three or four days), and he said, Oh, yes, yes, we'll start doing that. And then we began talking about music and a lot of other things. And he completely forgot and we never got around to notating it. And then I came the next day and I said, I'd like to start writing the music that we're going to be recording and he said, Yes, yes, we will do that later. Let's have some tea first and then we can—and basically what he wanted to do was talk about modern music. And he was asking me to explain to him how Stockhausen worked and he wanted to know who John Cage was and we were—and I was getting into these kind of impromptu discussions about contemporary music. Meanwhile, I was trying to write this music down. Finally, on the day of the session, I knew the musicians were going to be there when we arrived. So, I said, we have to start doing this work and I mean—but what I didn't realize—I discovered this years later, that when Ravi was working this is exactly what he would do: he would walk into the studio without writing a note of music, the musicians would be sitting there, and they would wait for him, and he would just give it to them. So, in fact, he didn't understand what my problem was—that I had to have this music written down, but I didn't know how to write it.

*What were some of the problems that you found?*

Well, the biggest problem was how to organize the music. But getting the right rhythmic feeling in the music had to do with where in Western music—you would say where the bar lines go, where the strong beats and weak beats, where the rhythmic structure, how that was—how that developed in the music.



*When I picture a piece of music, it's where each measure begins.*

Basically. Of course this music wasn't written that way. It wasn't written with measures. And when we finally began, we got to the studio that morning, and I said, Oh, thank God we're there two hours early. And then we spent two hours tuning—the moor, which I ended up playing, and he spends two hours teaching me how to be the accompanist, which was fine. And then finally the session started, and he began, and so then everybody was sitting ready for the music and Ravi—then they projected the film. He looked at the picture and he began playing the sitar and I had to write down what he was playing. Well, the difficulty was writing it down in the—in a notation that would reflect the rhythmic feeling that he was playing. And it took—you know to be truthful we solved the problem very, relatively quick. It was three or four hours that I figured out that there were new bar lines. That took me an hour at least to figure out—to get rid of the bar lines.

*So, there are no distinct measures?*

There weren't any measures, so I got rid of them entirely.

*This is an entire string of . . .*

There was a string of notes. However, I grouped them and I bracketed them by subgroups of twos and threes and fours, and then I discovered with—he never explained this to me—that there was a cycle of beats that kept recurring and that every time I came to the end of the cycle the whole thing began again. And then after I realized that, that the cycles would be divided into four, four, four, four, or sometimes five, five, two, two, two, or sometimes three, three, four, three. All this would add up to sixteen. So, by the afternoon, I realized that the trick of notation was that every line would add up to sixteen, and that what I had to do was make sure that I organized the groups of notes in such a way that the accents came in the right places.

*And then what did you carry from that into your own compositions?*

Well, I kept making a mess and we would—I would write something down and we would play it and it didn't sound right. And I would write it again and it didn't sound right. It was trial and error. And he kept saying all the notes are the same, all the notes are equal. But I had no idea what he really meant. And then finally I realized that in fact it wasn't a question of taking a cycle and dividing it up. It was a question of adding it up. So, it was a question of adding instead of dividing. In other words the cycle consisted of a unit that was added on to each to other. And that instead of taking, for example taking—I'll use this example: in sort of making a loaf of bread—slicing a loaf of bread by taking half, then quarters, then eighths and so forth, you instead make a loaf of bread by taking a slice and then adding another slice, and another slice, and other slice, and at the end you would have the whole loaf. It's a very different way of slicing bread.

*When you go—*

Did you get that?

*Yes.*

So, but the point was that it was a different way of organizing rhythm. And I saw that within a few days of working with Ravi. I understood something which was—I found this completely astonishing—that music could be organized in a completely different way than what I had thought. And that was—and in fact then I began listening to other music, and I realized that the tradition of Western classical music, or popular music for that matter, was only one description, one way of describing the way music can be organized and from that moment on I got interested in music from other parts of the world.

*Looking at your career from the outside, one of the things that is striking is the number of different collaborators you have worked with. And I wonder if part of the reason why you do that is because you had this seminal experience of confronting somebody else's work . . .*

That's exactly, that's exactly—what happens when you find your place, yourself in a place of total ignorance—that's the place where you begin again. You can begin learning again. You know the difficulty with any—with not just artists or musicians—but with anybody in ordinary life, any walk of life, the difficulty we have is how we continue to learn. I mean I think everybody has this problem. We're driving that same car. The car can be a Model T Ford and you drive it all your life. You never learn how to drive anything else. And it's with great effort that you learn to change. And this is particularly true of composers. They pick up a style or a way of working a certain way but the real question—as I've always said to younger composers—is that it's not how do you find your voice but how to get rid of it. Getting the voice isn't hard; it's getting rid of the damn thing. Because once you've got the voice, then you're kind of stuck with it.

*Do you ever try to compose so it doesn't sound like Philip Glass . . .*

I do it all the time. And I fail all the time. I was ready—I think that—I had a wonderful experience when I did my first record for CBS Records, and I did a piece called "Opening," and it was for a piano and I started the record with it. And they said We can't put out a record like this because no one will know it's you. And that was actually the point. I was trying to—I learned that the only hope of shaking free of your description of music was to place yourself in such an untenable position that you had to figure out something new. That happened with Ravi Shankar in 1964. And I repeated that experience—I do it whenever I can. And that means constantly finding new people to work with. The other thing is that as much as I try to do it, how rarely I've actually succeeded. It's very humbling actually when you realize how hard it is to break out of your own training. It's very, very difficult.

*And how do you feel about that?*

Think of it this way. If I looked at the body of work over the last 30 years, and there are about 30 CDs, and if I look at it that way, and if I take a piece that I wrote in 1969, let's say, and I compare it to—I heard you playing a little bit of “Dracula,” something I wrote last summer. If I listen to those two pieces together, they do sound like they were written by different people practically. And that actually is—that was—but on the other hand if I look at pieces that were written within three or four years of each other, I don't hear that. It takes a span of 10 or 15 years for me, because the changes are so incremental that I don't—I can't notice them.

*One of the striking things about the newer pieces is that they seem much more romantic and melodic.*

Exactly. And you—that was—you see that depends where you start. Had I started perhaps with the romantic, I would have ended up writing minimalist music, so I ended up writing romantic music. Basically wherever, whatever point I started was the point I left behind.

*You once said that there are operas that you've wanted to do with Robert Wilson for 15 years.*

I have really wanted to do it. I will tell you what it is. It's called the “Pass of the Arabian Knights.” I thought that that would be a good piece for Bob and I to do. They actually have a libretto. No one has done it.

*And why? What would you have to do? Like how well known would you both have to be?*

Oh, it's not a question of that. For one thing—to be truthful there are a lot of young, good composers around who deserve to have their operas done. And now you take an opera house in even a major city like San Francisco, or Chicago or New York—at the Met for example. They will do one new opera every other year.

*Yeah.*

Now one opera is not very many operas. So you say, Well, what's the difficulty. The difficulty is that there are a lot of interesting composers, and you only get to do one a year and so a lot of places say, We did Phil Glass. They did me in '87 so they're not ready to do it again.

*Do you think it matters if new artists create new work?*

Do you know who it matters to? It matters to the people that listen.

*When you perform a piece, over and over again, do you get to a point—you know like when one buys a record and you play it over and over again in the car, and in the house, and it gets to the point where the song becomes like gum that's been chewed up.*

No, in fact it works quite a different way. It works quite differently. People like to do the world premiere because they get the glory of the world premier, but in fact in my view (and I've done this numerous, numerous times) I consider the first performances as just learning the piece. And think about it this way. If you think of a pianist who plays a Schubert sonata through his whole lifetime, or if you listen to Rubenstein in his later years, or Horowitz playing, you understand the richness with which they play that music. And how differently they must have played it when they were younger.

*As you go through your tours do you find yourself falling in love with different sections as it goes on?*

I feel it's only after about 20 performances that we really begin to understand what the dynamic structure of the piece is. You know writing the piece is only one insight into the quality of the piece. Performing the piece is a whole other way of looking at it. And when the composer is also the performer, he has an opportunity to come to an understanding of his work, and I would say the only way he can do it is through performing it.

*What did you discover at the end of performing something like "Einstein on the Beach," which you performed throughout all of its early performances, and in rehearsals.*

By the end of the performance we could actually play it. I would hate—I don't know if anyone ever recorded that first night. But I'm sure it was a mess. We could barely play the music and that's true for a lot of new music. In order for a musical language that's new to exist we have to find a new way of playing it. There is no such thing—this is a little bit similar to what we were talking about before—as playing it the same way. In other words, there's a performance technique that goes with the language. The language comes first because you think it up, but the performance technique comes afterwards. And that can take, that can take years to develop.

*I've wondered, listening to some of the music, if there are times when you're writing that you actually aren't sure what it's going to sound and feel like . . .*

Oh, let me tell you, I just did a piece in Salzburg. I finished the piece last January. It was a symphony in 12 movements. It's a 100 minutes long. It's a rather large piece. It was commissioned for the millennium, and until the night of the performance—it's not that we didn't know what it sounded like, we could hear what the music sounded like, but we didn't know what it felt like to hear it. We didn't know what it added up to. I mean I can—it's like reading the recipe in a cookbook and you still have yet to taste the food.

*Are there times when you feel like you've guessed wrong?*

That's when you do the rewrites of course, but surprisingly—you would be surprised—I am surprised at how little, because very often, and I said to the conductor Dennis Russell Davies, when I was doing this piece—we just did it about two weeks ago in Salzburg—and I said to Dennis before the performance, with this piece, it's a piece that's a 100 minutes long, with a very complicated text. And I said to him I'm working at the limits of what

I can conceptualize. And I said Frankly, I don't know—I said I took the music when I got there. And it's in 12 movements. I put the 12 movements on the floor. I made 12 piles of music. You know, so there were—each pile of music was a movement, and I went from movement to movement trying to listen to the piece to see what—it couldn't fit on the piano. It was 800 pages. I mean, the whole thing was just unreal, you know trying to figure this thing out. And—and for me it was—let's say if it was a sculptor was trying to conceptualize a piece, that sculptor couldn't walk around the piece all at once. You know you can only see one part of the piece at a time. And I was having that problem with this piece. I was only able to hear three or four parts at a time, and then I moved on to the next part. And the—and I wasn't familiar enough with the music to be able to hear. By the time I was at part five, I kind of forgot what two was like. I mean we're talking about 30 minutes later. And even during the first dress rehearsal we didn't really hear it. Because we—the room—the acoustics in the room weren't good enough.

*Do you find this to be an enormously fertile time for artists to do new work and explore?*

Relatively. It depends who you talk to. If you're a producer of operas and films and if you're involved in productions that involve large amounts of money, it's not a very open time. People are terrified of making multi-million dollar mistakes in film and in opera and in everything. If you talk to the people that are making the work, it is very open. And I think we all have the feeling that the whole distribution system of music and books is going to change. We're talking about, of course, the Internet.

*But even before that—I mean it's possible for you to tour and do your work and get an audience, even if you—*

I did it with great difficulty and with relentless energy, and I don't—I hardly know any one else, to be frank, who has done it the way I have. It's extremely difficult to—I do about 120 concerts a year.

*Is that for business, is that to keep the work out there? Is that because you love—*

It has nothing to do with business. I could stop working right now. It has to do with understanding what the nature of music is. It's only through the constant—for me immersion in the process of creating and recreating music, that I begin to understand what music is really about. I'm really talking about what the essential nature of music is and I find that the experience of performing music in front of people is the essential experience for the composer. It's at that moment when the whole—let's say—transaction of music, when we see it clearly for what it is: that it's not a conceptual activity. It's not—music doesn't exist in the library. It exists in the air. It exists in something we hear. When someone—if you go to a library and you see hundreds of scores and you're not actually looking at music, you're looking at notations of music. You know, the actual music exists when you play it. Art exists as a transaction between people. And music is perhaps the most sublime thing that you can imagine—perhaps poetry, or whatever you might say, you might have your own favorites—but for me, of course, it's music. So the point of performing is to reaffirm the essential characteristic of music, which is that it's a sublime currency passed between people.



# DEATH SENTENCES

*Radmila Lazic*

I was born too late and am much too old,  
My dear Hamlet,  
To be your pimply Ophelia,

To spread my hair like flattened wheat  
Over dark waters,  
Upset the floating lilies  
With my floating eyes,

Glide between fishes like a fish,  
Sink to the bottom like a seashell,  
Burrow in the sand next to shipwrecks of love,  
I the amphora entangled in seaweeds.

I'd rather see you take off my dress.  
Let it to fall to my feet like an aspen leaf  
Which the wind, playing dumb,  
Shakes without asking permission

I'd rather have that death sentence,  
Eternity of your arms around my neck.

# ANTHROPOMORPHIC CLOSET

There's no more room. We are full.  
Everything we stored, layer by layer,  
Folded, packed in as if bandaging wounds.  
Belongings we hung by a hook,  
Belongings we lined up on hangers,  
Winter wishes, summer dreams,  
Sunsets, snowy peaks,  
Yours-mine, sighs and sobs  
Now shifted every which way.

Forgotten. Taken down in a hurry.  
Thrown in the corner. Turned inside out.  
What is indispensable and what is less so  
Thrown on the top of one another.  
Once made to measure, grown short,  
Grown too tight, faded or shiny it's all here:

Adam's broken rib.  
The plucked angel's wing.  
Venus' fur and love-stain.  
Rings. Combs. Ghosts. Moths.  
No one can find anything here.  
Where is it? Turn it upside down! Rummage!  
Lost, then found again.  
Rejected, then cherished again.  
Cobwebs sway. The mouse gnaws.  
The butterfly spreads its wings.

Torn in the eye. The sea on its last breath.  
Night-day. Loves—doesn't love.  
Throw it out—keep. Give-take.  
This to the dry cleaners. This to the devil.  
The creases of lust. Washed out heart.  
Weepy muslin. Ariadne's thread.  
Adjectival lace. Aorist.  
Sentences-rags. Flake of words. Peek out  
Of drawers, dangle. Expired. Eternal.  
Trickle. Ooze. Shed tears. Drip pleasures.  
The snivel of time passing. Used up life.

*—translated from the Serbian by Charles Simic*

# CUCKOO'S REPORT

*Sarah Gridley*

I speak in years and coins. I speak my own name  
across all contexts: deuce, deuce, deuce. If you were listening  
needles kept tacit guard at the forest  
beginning where snow fell in two directions,  
once, by volume, once, by discernment. The first was mute,  
and loved the world, the other was lost,  
and loved the world. Intermission fell between them.  
space for the rising, space for the stretching,  
space for the yawning. A cello  
curved beneath the bark, varnishing a sermon.  
When the cloudwork went down and was melted  
on the tongue, it was known that the work  
had neither feather, nor pinion. Exposure took  
quick root: the wingful idea of snow lay down  
in gray waves. Breath consented, tacked in the up & cross-  
drafts of winter. Better than feckless, it could stick  
on a tightrope. And did it. And did it. And did it. A weather ever  
recruiting new camps: Loves me, Loves me not, Loves me,  
Loves me not. So could indifference grow  
fond. And sweet were the uses.

# THE SORE THROAT

*Aaron Kunin*

I'm inventing a machine  
for concealing my desire.  
And I'm inventing another  
machine for concealing the  
machine. It's a two-machine  
system, and it sounded like  
laughter. And I'm inventing  
a machine for concealing  
the sound. You, to me: "Why are  
you concealing the beauty  
of your machine?" Every machine  
has more beauty than the last,  
for everything whose purpose  
is to conceal seems to change,  
in the end, into a sign  
of what it's concealing. And  
now the sound that once sounded  
like laughter is so loud that  
it seems more like sobbing or  
laughter concealing sobbing.  
All my inventing is a  
complete disaster. It's not  
concealing my desire, it's  
talking about my desire  
to conceal my desire, like  
a voice on a message machine

that would say: "Hello. About  
desire, I'd like to say a  
word or two. It's not your eyes,  
it's not the word you say, it's  
not your complaining voice that  
I desire. All I desire  
is your applause." It's hard not  
to hear what the message is  
saying, also it's hard to  
keep myself from inventing  
another machine to keep  
from hearing it. So invent  
a machine for disinventing.  
This will be the last machine  
I ever invent, and its  
purpose will just be to change  
every machine into shit.  
No more inventing (for me).

# THE LESSONS OF THE MASTER: L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E & LATE JAMES

Donald Revell

*The overtones are a denser shadow in the room characterized by its habitual readiness, a form of charged waiting, a perpetual attendance, of which I was thinking when I began the paragraph . . . .*

—Lyn Hejinian, *My Life*

In the later work of Henry James, style is “charged waiting.” Distrust and delay enact purposes that are moral and which commend the substance of a style: the exposure of idealism as a cruel constraint upon the living; the indictment of harmony as an aphasia of inattention; the objectification of point-of-view as systemic dysfunction and lyrical self-regard. These purposes oppose the social and psychological commodification of human life, and human life is the theme of James’ later work—life in the full reality of its gaps and accidents. The master’s method is nothing less than the atomization of commodity and all its handsome devices. Therefore Henry James strongly precedes many writers of the 20th century American avant-garde. In “habitual readiness” to listen, in the “charged waiting” and “perpetual attendance” of his sentences, he performs a permanently contemporary experiment upon the language of our culture. He prepares his pages for catastrophes of possession. He opens the transcript wherein late capitalism elaborates life unto death.

The escape would have been to love her; then he would have lived. . . . The Beast had lurked indeed, and the Beast, at its hour, had sprung; it had sprung in that twilight of the cold April when, pale, ill, wasted, but all beautiful, and perhaps even then recoverable, she

had risen from her chair to stand before him and let him imaginably guess. . . . He had justified his fear and achieved his fate; he had failed, with the last exactitude, of all he was to fail of; and a moan now rose to his lips as he remembered she had prayed he mightn't know. This horror of waking—this was knowledge, knowledge under the breath of which the very tears in his eyes seemed to freeze. Through them, none the less, he tried to fix it and hold it; he kept it there before him so that he might feel the pain. . . . He saw the Jungle of his life and saw the lurking Beast; then, while he looked, perceived it, as by a stir of the air, rise, huge and hideous, for the leap that was to settle him. His eyes darkened—it was close; and, instinctively turning, in his hallucination, to avoid it, he flung himself, face down, on the tomb.

—"The Beast in the Jungle," 401-402A

First didn't write Anguish of the heart  
Smart of the cure

Strip furlong field

Feet on someone else's wheat

Easy market access

On-going struggle  
abandoned lands

Lost power of expression  
Last power of expression

—Susan Howe, *The Nonconformist's Memorial* 63



John Marcher's appointment with destiny is a catastrophe of delay. James' cadences, protracted by modifiers, perforated by dashes, and suspended by semi-colons, model a performance art of Marcher's consciousness. And as we read the performance, re-enacting the delays, we understand that the life which Marcher might have lived depended principally upon an "escape" from point-of-view, a rupture of self from self-image. The longer Marcher chooses to inhabit his dream of fatedness, the more certain it becomes that the pleasures of waking to love in otherness will waste and spoil, ending as only "horror." Having commodified his entire existence under a rubric of fate, the self-destructive late bourgeois makes enemies of time and transformation. Certainty has nothing happy to show to Marcher, and hence a scripted vertigo of an indeterminate "it" perfectly transcribes the speechless dialectic of his mind. Reference is avoided to the point of hallucination, and only the settlement of oblivion brings hallucination to a close. This sequencing of delusion, delay, and death anticipates much of the meaning and method of Susan Howe's contemporary project. Committed to "unsettling" the self-image of American texts, Howe, as in the passage cited above, assaults the dangerous hallucination of the originary: "A First didn't write it." The lie of self-reliance, the fantasy of colonialism, like the self-colonizing fantasy of Marcher's fate, ends in silence, in a literal nothing to express. The captivating commodity of makeshift make-believe manifest destiny is a tomb.

By this time he had survived all his friends; the last straight flame was three years old, there was no one to add to the list . . . Where should he put in another, where, if there were no other objection, would it stand in its place in the rank? . . . There came a day when, for simple exhaustion, if symmetry should demand just one he was ready so far to meet symmetry. Symmetry was harmony, and the idea of harmony began to haunt him; he said to himself that harmony was of course everything. He took, in fancy, his composition

to pieces, redistributing it into other lines, making other juxtapositions and contrasts. He shifted this and that candle, he made the spaces different, he effaced the disfigurement of a possible gap. . . . Finally, in this way, he arrived at a conception of the total, the ideal, which left a clear opportunity for just another figure. . . . There was a strange confusion in the thought, for he felt the day to be near when he too should be one of the Others. What in this event would the Others matter to him, since they only mattered to the living? . . . What had harmony to do with the case if his lights were all to be quenched? What he had hoped for was an instituted thing. He might perpetuate it on some other pretext, but his special meaning would have been dropped.

—"The Altar of the Dead" 267-268

The angle of the light has changed greatly this past week. I have learned to use my eyes and to distrust them. I am dependent on everything. Words gather into triangles and vertical lines. The sentences they form should not exist. Poems will sometimes overcome them, or else stones.

—Michael Palmer, "Notes for Echo Lake" 69

The trajectory of "The Altar of the Dead" moves immitigably towards closer and closer confinement. Along its course, Stransom comes to feel the totalizing, fatal claustrophobia of ideality. The candles exhaust his air and all his space. By the end of the story, no room remains for movement or for meaningful change. Having betrayed existence by means of a backward piety, Stransom must acknowledge the bitter exclusivity of a harmony

whose rigorous symmetries forbid the unmotivated activity of human life. Following this acknowledgement, Stransom, to his late credit, struggles to resist, and his resistance, in the manner of numerous L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E practitioners, takes the form of shifting erasure and redistribution. But unseparated from its originary ideal, his system, though disturbed, remains closed, remains a suffocating totality. Stransom does not recant his faith in the "instituted thing," the fantastic metaphysical altar he first and ultimately mistook for hope. In "The Altar of the Dead," it is just this commodification of hope under a rubric of harmony that silences the fiction and drops the "special meaning" of Stransom's life into a tomb as inescapable as Marcher's. For Stransom, "the escape would have been" a praxis similar to Michael Palmer's in "Notes for Echo Lake," an extraordinary text in which erasure and redistribution disclaim originary authorial statutes. Light changes of its own accord. Point-of-view is explicitly distrusted. Words gather into asymmetrical figures of their own devising as the unmotivated activity of writing overwhelms the totalizing sentences. Self-sentenced to airless closure, Marcher and Stransom perish as objects in the midst of objectless objects. Refusing the handsome capital delay of shape, Palmer's sentences escape into poetry.

... Brydon breathed his wonder till the very impunity of his attitude and the very insistence of his eyes produced, as he felt, a sudden stir which showed the next instant as a deeper portent, while the head raised itself, the betrayal of a deeper purpose. The hands, as he looked, began to move, to open; then, as if deciding in a flash, dropped from the face and left it uncovered and presented. Horror, with the sight, had leaped into Brydon's throat, gasping there in a sound he couldn't utter; for the bared identity was too hideous as *his*, and his glare was the passion of his protest. . . . It was unknown, inconceivable, awful, disconnected from any possibility—! He had been "sold," he inwardly moaned, stalking such game as this; the

presence before him was a presence, the horror within him a horror, but the waste of his nights had been only grotesque and the success of his adventure an irony. . . . It came upon him nearer now, quite as one of those expanding fantastic images projected by the magic lantern of childhood; for the stranger, whoever he might be, evil, odious, blatant, vulgar, had advanced as for aggression, and he knew himself give ground. Then harder pressed still, sick with the force of his shock, and falling back as under the hot breath and roused passion of a life larger than his own, a rage of personality before which his own collapsed, he felt the whole vision turn to darkness and his very feet give way. His head went round; he was going; he had gone.

—"The Jolly Corner" 225-226

Every one always is repeating the whole of them. Always, one having loving repeating to getting completed understanding must have in them an open feeling, a sense for all the slightest variations in repeating, must never lose themselves so in the solid steadiness of all repeating. . . . If they get deadened by the steady pounding of repeating they will not learn from each one even though each one always is repeating the whole of them they will not learn the completed history of them, they will not know the being really in them.

—Gertrude Stein, *The Making of Americans* 268

In "The Jolly Corner," origin, structure, and the sense of the past as place conjoin as one "instituted thing": the house. Among all the characters of James' later fiction, Spencer Brydon best articulates the syntactic captivation of a commodified life. His language approaches then withdraws from the unreal estate of his origins with protracted compulsion. Its melodramatic delays, its overwrought and inconclusive revelations arise from a perfect

horror of otherness, of possibility, of alternatives long since mutilated by denial. And because all such aleatory circumstances have been occultized by Brydon's mandarin exile, they are, when inescapably possessed, inherited "as *his*," more horrible still. Brydon's language and mind function as disclaimers of possibility. When possibility refuses to be disclaimed, the result is unconsciousness. Brydon has indeed been "sold" into the thralldom of a closed system of ironies, a system whose impenetrable self-reference excludes real time in favor of a spectral innocence. To do nothing is not the same as to have done no harm. It is a lifetime's suppression of this distinction that arouses the "rage of personality" which, unchecked at the last, overwhelms Brydon, utterly disabling the long misrepresentation of subjection as subjectivity, of object-compulsion as objectivity, that had been his entire mind. And as James rigorously enacts the consequences of misrepresentation as the unmaking of an American, so Gertrude Stein, in antiphon, vigorously performs the representational activity which might well constitute a viable American language. Instead of closure, openness. Instead of destiny, variation. Instead of the self-mutilating resistance to time's endless alternative, an ecstatic perceptual innocence. The syntax and cadence of Gertrude Stein insist that nothing is merely repeated by repetition. The same word is different because of when it sounds. The same mind is changed because of where it says. It is useful and proper to observe the "perpetual attendance" of James' later style unclosing our written language, making clear places and opportunities for the limitless ephemera of Stein and then of our current avant garde.

# ADDRESS TO WINNIE IN PARIS

*Sarah Manguso*

Winnie, I am writing this on behalf of my friend Harris. He loves you and wants you to love him. I have never been to Paris, but I have heard that it is a good place to be in love in.

The Arc de Triomphe is real. The Jardin des Tuileries is real. The Eiffel Tower is very real. The carafe of wine, the remains of dinner, the bill: all real. None are necessary to your life.

Harris has confided that he enjoys dating. To profess such a thing is to advertise a facility for one kind of loneliness, which has nothing to do with the other kind: the one which you did not know was there until afterward.

The part of the betrayal which wounds the most is hearing that it has already happened.

Diderot writes that the word is not the thing, but a flash in whose light we perceive the thing. Plato wrote of the need to be reconjoined with the rest of oneself. My analyst speaks stirringly of codependent impulses in modern society. These various explanations are metaphors for an inaccessible truth.

In de Laclos, a betrayal is an invitation to a string of further betrayals, each one taking you further from the original. If the hell for lovers consists in being betrayed, the hell for the beloved consists in betraying. These hells comprise the world.

A much older friend writes: Most romances do not last, and it is best to forget them. Tolstoy writes: All happy families are alike. My teacher says: Bad poems are all bad for the same reason: imprecision.

Around you move many seas. It is impossible not to drown a little. In Bulfinch's, an anchor is let down into the garden. This is to remind us that we live underwater.

Up above the high-water mark, angels with their teeth and their sharp little wings watch us with murderous disinterest. They sentence us for the one crime we all commit.

It is said by area doctors that cowboys notoriously misrepresent their degree of pain. For this reason, their diseases progress far beyond the point at which treatment is beneficial. Are they lying?

If I could read only one sentence for the rest of my life, it would be the one where the jailer says to Socrates "I can see that you are a good man, the best one that has ever been in this place."

These examples are meant to dissuade you, Winnie, from loving men other than my friend Harris. He asked me to write this poem.

Arvol Looking Horse, a Sioux leader, called Devils Tower *the heart of everything that is*. Very large objects remind us of the possibility of the infinite, which has no size at all. But we understand it as something very, very large.

What the lover seeks is the possibility of return, the strange heart beating under every stone.

# A VILLAGE JOURNAL

*Srikanth Reddy*

Went to the knife-grinder with my broken tool  
and a gunny sack brimming with soy. Was told to return

the third or the second day; withdrew to my lean-to;  
made out a report, buried it under the threshold.

Outside: a rust-colored beetle crawling the fabric.  
Inside: night-mowers sweeping a violet meadow.

Affixed a red pin to each point where they'd been;  
took down the projection; rolled it up in a canister.

Scrubbed my blister. Boxed the green pins. Practiced  
in front of the mirror for a while. Mainly greetings

and some simple questions: what sort of machines  
did they leave in the salt flats? In the forests?

Did they stay very long? Lay down on the string bed.  
The stringy bed. A new kind of sleep. Dry, mottled,

clawed flakes of sleep; sleep of the father thrumming.  
Woke to the granite wheel sound. Mist, thatch.

Radioed ahead; was told to wait, waited; smoked.



# CONTRIBUTORS

CAL BEDIENT is the author of *Candy Necklace* (Wesleyan University Press). *The Violence of the Morning* is forthcoming in 2002 from the University of Georgia Press.

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EUGEN JEBELEANU (1911-1991) was born in Campina, Romania. He received numerous European literary awards during his lifetime. A collection of his poems, *Secret Weapon*, will be published by Verse Press in 2001.

JOANNA KLINK's first book of poems, *They Are Sleeping*, has been recently published by the University of Georgia Press.

CAROLINE KNOX is the author of three books of poems. The selection of poems in this issue was reprinted from *The House Party* and *To Newfoundland*, both by the University of Georgia Press, and from *Sleeper's Wake* (Timken).

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VASKO POPA (1922-1991) is one of Eastern Europe's most renowned poets, and his work has been translated from the Serbian into numerous languages. The essay and poem are reprinted with permission from Anvil Press, and originally appeared in their anthology *The Poetry of Survival*.

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PETER SACKS is the author of five collections of poetry, most recently *O Wheel and Necessity*.

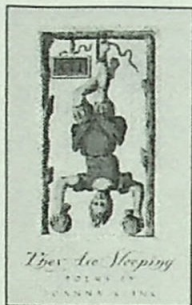
CHARLES SIMIC was born in Belgrade, Yugoslavia. He is the author of numerous books of poems, translations, and essays, including most recently *A Fly in the Soup: Memoirs*, and the book of poems, *Juckstraws*.

LEONARDO DA VINCI (1452-1519) was an Italian painter, draftsman, sculptor, architect, and engineer. "Themes Physiological and Anatomical" first appeared in *The Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci* (Reynal & Hitchcock, 1939).

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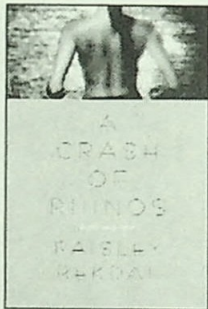
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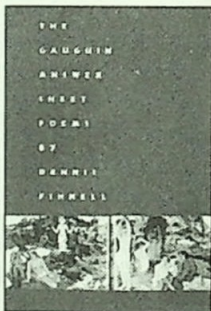
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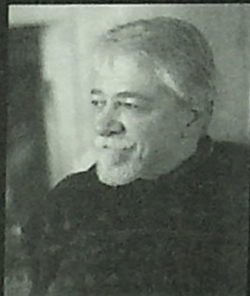
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